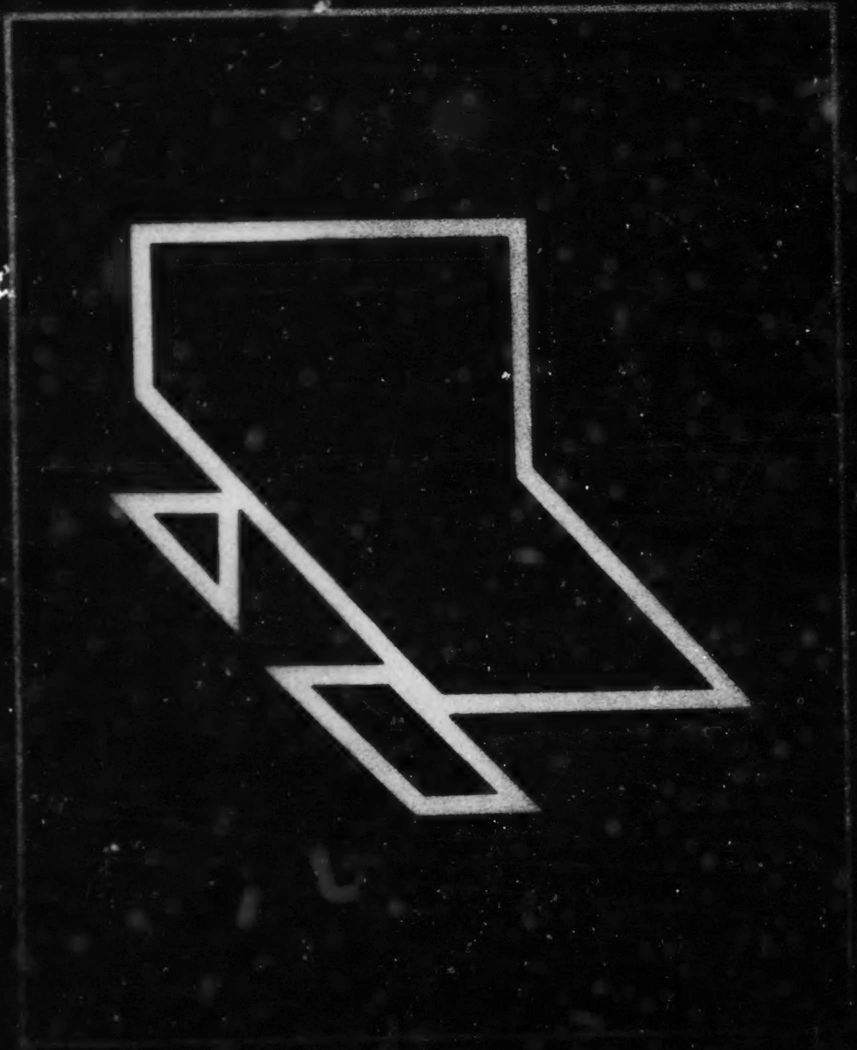
# The
# Peace River-Alaska Highway
# Tourism Region



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# PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY

# Acknowledgements

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The responsibility for the report as written and all conclusions reached herein is the Consultants alone and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of those who assisted during the course of this investigaton and the Federal and Provincial Governments which funded the study

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# 1.0 PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGIONAL TOURISM PLAN

## 1.1 Introduction

In recognition of the increasing importance of tourism to the Province of British Columbia, nine regional tourism plans, of which the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region is one, have been prepared under the terms of the Canada-British Columbia Travel Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement (TIDSA). The purpose of this document is to examine and assess tourism opportunities in the northeast of the Province, especially along the Alaska Highway, and to outline development opportunities that could be undertaken through the Federal-Provincial Agreement as well as by other government agencies and the private sector. In the preparation of this document, it is recognized that much of the Plan will be implemented by separate agencies and individuals and through specific project plans. Tourism planning is a continuous dynamic process that must respond to markets, the financial community, environmental implications, and the needs of the travelling public. This Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Development Plan is part of that process and has been prepared in accordance with the British Columbia Tourism Development Strategy.1)

## 1.2 Regional Setting

The Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region, an area of approximately 265,600 km$^2$ in size,2) is located in the northeastern part of the mainland of British Columbia. The area is defined by the British Columbia-Northwest/Yukon Territories borders on the north, the British Columbia-Alberta border on the east, the boundary of the Omineca-Peach Resource Management Region on the west, and to the south by the boundaries of several resource management units.3) The area is similar to the Peace River-Liard Regional District with variations in the south and northwest. The boundaries of the Tourism Region were determined as a result of the preparation of the British Columbia Tourism Strategy4) in 1979.

With 28% of the province's area, only 65,200 persons or 2.6% of the total provincial population[5)] lived within the study area in 1979. Dawson Creek with a 1979 estimated population of 13,260 and Fort St. John with 15,286 population (1979 estimate) are the current major tourist service centres. The major attractions are big game hunting, the Bennett Dam and the Alaska Highway. The closest concentrated markets are the urban centres[6)] of Greater Prince George (78,210), Edmonton Sub-Region (645,000) and Grande Prairie (18,479); important but not close is the Lower Mainland (1,277,000) including Greater Vancouver. Vancouver and Edmonton are the major air gateways for overseas international visitors and the United States markets. Prince George plays a lesser gateway role. The Yellowhead 16 Tourism Region with the interprovincial Yellowhead 16 travel corridor lies to the west and south of the Region; to the north lies the Yukon Territory and Alaska, growing tourist destination areas for North Americans and an expanding European market. To the east lies the Albertan Peace River Country. None of these sparsely populated regions provide major markets for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region.

The Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region contains two major mountain ranges, the Cassiar/Omineca to the west and the Rocky Mountains in the central portion, which slope to a broad plateau and lowland in the east. The rugged terrain is bisected by numerous valleys, with many lakes and rivers, the most notable of these valleys is the Rocky Mountain Trench. Vehicular transportation within the Region is limited as there are vast areas without roads. The major road network that does exist is primarily in the southern and eastern portions, while the Alaska Highway traverses most of the Region from southeast to the north.

Considering its remoteness, road access to the Region is quite good from major metropolitan centres, specifically via three highways: Highway 2 from Edmonton; the John Hart Highway 97; and the Alaska Highway. The latter two connect the Region with Prince

George and Whitehorse, respectively. Two national airlines connect the Region to Vancouver and Edmonton; there are two provincial railroads with passenger service as far as Dawson Creek and freight service as far as Fort Nelson; proposed industrial rail lines are currently under construction to the northeastern portion of the Region.

The major economic activities in the Region are related to natural gas and oil exploration, mineral extraction and processing; forestry including lumber, pulp and paper mills; agriculture; government and retail services; and tourism. Tourism is important in Dawson Creek and could play a major role in Hudson's Hope and other smaller communities such as Fort Nelson, Chetwynd and Taylor.

Through review of the regional setting, the influences of adjacent areas on the Region's tourism potential can be assessed. This Tourism Region currently rates last in terms of numbers of visitors, most of whom are pass-through visitors often bound for the Yukon or Alaska. Some international travellers, especially those drawn to big game hunting, come to the Region using the Vancouver or Edmonton gateways. South of the Region lies the Yellowhead 16 Highway, a major inter-provincial travel corridor (Manitoba to British Columbia) with connections through Prince Rupert to Alaska and southern British Columbia. However, much of that traffic bypasses the Region although connected by the John Hart Highway. Generally the Yellowhead 16 is a better quality road than the John Hart.

Northwestern Alberta, whose population is growing with the increasing oil and natural gas production, has little tourism development. Area residents travel south or west to this Region for recreation. The Stewart-Cassiar Highway 37, also west of the Region, and under an upgrading program, is expected to be the

Alaska Highway's major competitor for tourists as the Stewart-Cassiar will be a better quality road with easy access to Yellowhead 16. Generally, the Stewart-Cassiar is a more scenic route as it passes through mountains its entire length, unlike the Alaska Highway. There are few major tourist attractions near the boundaries of the Region; Mount Robson Provincial Park and Jasper National Park are the closest attractions and are a good day's drive to the south east. However, Yukon and Alaska to the north are important tourism destination areas and draw visitors along the Alaska Highway through this Tourism Region. In the Northwest Territories, Nahanni National Park is north of Fort Nelson, which is often the air access point.

## 1.3 Current Tourism Development

The Region's tourism industry is still in its infancy, primarily because of the distances involved in travelling in northern Canada. There is a lack of services and facilities for tourists and a lack of attractions to keep them in the area. The majority of visitors are there for business reasons. Most tourists are hunters and fishermen from the United States and Europe, or people in recreational vehicles travelling the Alaska Highway in summer. The main attractions of the Region are the wilderness and outdoor activities, especially big game hunting, the famous Alaska Highway, and the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. None of the existing attractions exceeds an attendance of 50,000 persons annually. Extending the tourism season is a major local concern but the long and harsh winter has, to date, been a limiting factor. Future development of the tourism industry will depend heavily on investments in the transportation and resource sectors (e.g. upgrading of the Alaska Highway, construction of an Alaska Highway Pipeline and Northeast Coal). A number of major new hotels with support amenities have been constructed, primarily in response to oil and gas exploration.

## 1.4 Study Approach

Development of the Regional Tourism Plan for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region was undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team in accordance with the provincial and regional approach presented in the report, British Columbia Tourism Development Strategy. The work has been carried out under the TIDSA (October 1978) and the guidance of an Inter-Governmental Management Committee.

The Regional Plan recognizes the need for joint resource planning to enhance tourism development and has been prepared in the context of planning done by other provincial and federal agencies, particularly Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Fish and Wildlife, Tourism, Heritage Conservation, Forest Service, Transportation and Highways, Environment, Municipal Affairs, Fisheries and Oceans, and Parks Canada.

In addition, regional and local governments, travel industry groups and special purpose organizations such as heritage societies, environmental groups or chambers of commerce were invitied to present their ideas on the future of tourism within the Region. This process added further insight into opportunities and the social capability of the area to sustain more tourism activities.

The Regional Tourism Plan as presented in this document represents most of the background inventory and analysis elements available and all have been fully considered but presentation is not to the same degree as has been the case in some of the regional tourism plans. The plan development components cover all key concerns although the text is not as elaborate.

In terms of methodology, the study relies primarily on secondary data and information provided by relevant agencies and individuals at the local, provincial and federal levels, and data developed through special studies carried out under TIDSA. These data sources have been augmented by field visits and maps as well as interviews and contacts with private and public agencies involved in tourism. No original user surveys or biophysical data collection was carried out for this study, although the most recent visitor data7) and results8) of local consultation were considered. Key local government reports were also reviewed.

An inventory and analysis was undertaken of the natural, physical, human and historic resources of the area to determine existing and potential opportunities for development. Visitor profiles were developed for the major tourism sectors and related to the supply of existing facilities, attractions, events and infrastructure. The tourism resources were identified and evaluated on a landscape basis to determine the location of outstanding tourism resources. Tourism markets were examined to determine trends in tourism and recreation and the shortfall or over-supply of local and regional opportunities in specific destination areas and along major transportation corridors.

The final two chapters in the report outline the proposed conceptual plan for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region and its relationship to the Provincial Strategy and the development plan with specific proposals identified to meet market requirements and resource opportunities. In the development of the Regional Plan, a hierarchy was prepared to guide both the planning and evaluation of proposals on an area, corridor and nodal basis. It should be noted that the study concentrates on the general travelling public; convention trade has not been assessed.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Province of British Columbia Tourism Development Strategy, October 1979. Marshall Macklin Monaghan Limited, Stevenson & Kellogg and L.J. D'Amore and Associates.

2. Based on the addition of the Peace-River-Liard Regional District Electoral Area G in the Fraser-Fort George Regional District, half of Electorial Area C in the Bulkley Nechako Regional District and a small portion of the Stikine Region (unincorporated). Source: Statistics Relating to the Regional and Municipal Governments in British Columbia, June 1979, Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

3. The Tourism Region's southern boundary follows the southern boundaries of resource management units 7-27, 7-28, 7-24, through the height of land in units 7-16, 7-18, to the British Columbia-Alberta border (Omineca-Peace Resource Management Region).

4. Marshall Macklin Monaghan Limited et al Op.Cit.

5. Based on the 1979 population estimates for the Peace River-Liard Regional District, Peace River-Liard Region Economic Development Overview, July 1979; Peace River-Liard Region Economic Development Commission, amended for population statistics February 1980; the 1976 Census for District of MacKenzie; 1976 Census for Electoral Area G of Fraser-Fort George Regional District and 1979 provincial estimate.

6. The market figures are derived as follows: Lower Mainland = 1976 Census; Greater Prince George from Prince George, B.C - 1979, City of Prince George; Edmonton Sub-Region 1979, City of Edmonton and Grande Prairie, 1979 municipal estimate.

7. Visitor Survey 1979, B.C. Research for the Ministry of Tourism.

8. Two forums were held, one in Fort St. John and one in Hudson's Hope, attended by representatives of 12 organizations. In addition, seven written submissions were reviewed and a special series of interviews conducted in Fort Nelson.

## 2.0 PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION TOURISM RESOURCES

### 2.1 Approach to Tourism Resources Assessment

This chapter is concerned with describing and evaluating the natural, physical, human and historical resources of the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. For the purposes of a regional tourism strategy, it is important to identify the present levels of use and the potential attractiveness (quality) of the available resources so that decisions can be made regarding their future development with respect to their carrying capacity (social as well as biophysical), the market opportunities and the objectives of the Province of British Columbia.

This chapter has been organized in a systematic manner to present a comprehensive overview of the natural conditions within the Region while highlighting the major existing and potential tourism/ recreational resources and features. After introducing the methodology used in the resource analysis, the chapter then continues with a description and evaluation of the significant natural, human, and historical resources, and the tourism infrastructure; the chapter concludes with a summary and assessment of the existing and potential tourism opportunities within the Region.

In order to systematically inventory and assess the tourism and recreational resources, four categories of resources were established, namely: natural, physical, human and historical. The resources within each of these categories were described and then assessed on a landscape unit basis. For the purposes of this tourism strategy, natural resources are defined as those parts of the landscape existing as a result of natural processes and include topographic-geologic features, climate, vegetation and fish and wildlife resources. Physical resources, on the other hand, are those constructed by man to provide the tourist with the necessary amenities (infrastructure) such as lodging, transportation services and recreational facilities. The crafts, popular events, sports and customs of the people of the Region make up the human resources. Historical resources are those structures, artifacts, activities or events that took place in the past of historic of archaeological significance. These were the four major categories in the resource base inventory.

The inventory and assessment of the tourism and recreational resources involved four steps:

1. Identification of landscape/planning units within the Region based on physiography, landscape character, water features and visual unity;
2. Inventory and analysis of all major tourism resources (natural, physical, human and historical);
3. Written descriptions or graphic presentation of all tourism resources, features and attractions; and
4. Evaluation of natural, physical, human and historical resources on the basis of landscape/planning units as well as individual travel corridors to assess existing levels of tourism use and development and to determine those areas with potential for tourism/recreational developments.

In order to undertake an assessment and comparison of the various resource categories, the four categories were further divided into several topic areas. For example, the natural resource category was divided into a geographical description of the major landform units, climate, vegetation, etc. and the physical resources category was divided into recreational lands and facilities, transportation, and accommodation. These divisons are discussed under each category and were assessed in an Evaluation Matrix to enable a summary and comparison of the relative abundance and quality of various aspects of the natural, physical, human and historical resources within the landscape units, each of which occupies a distinct part of the Region.

## 2.2 Natural Tourism Resources

### 2.2.1 Introduction

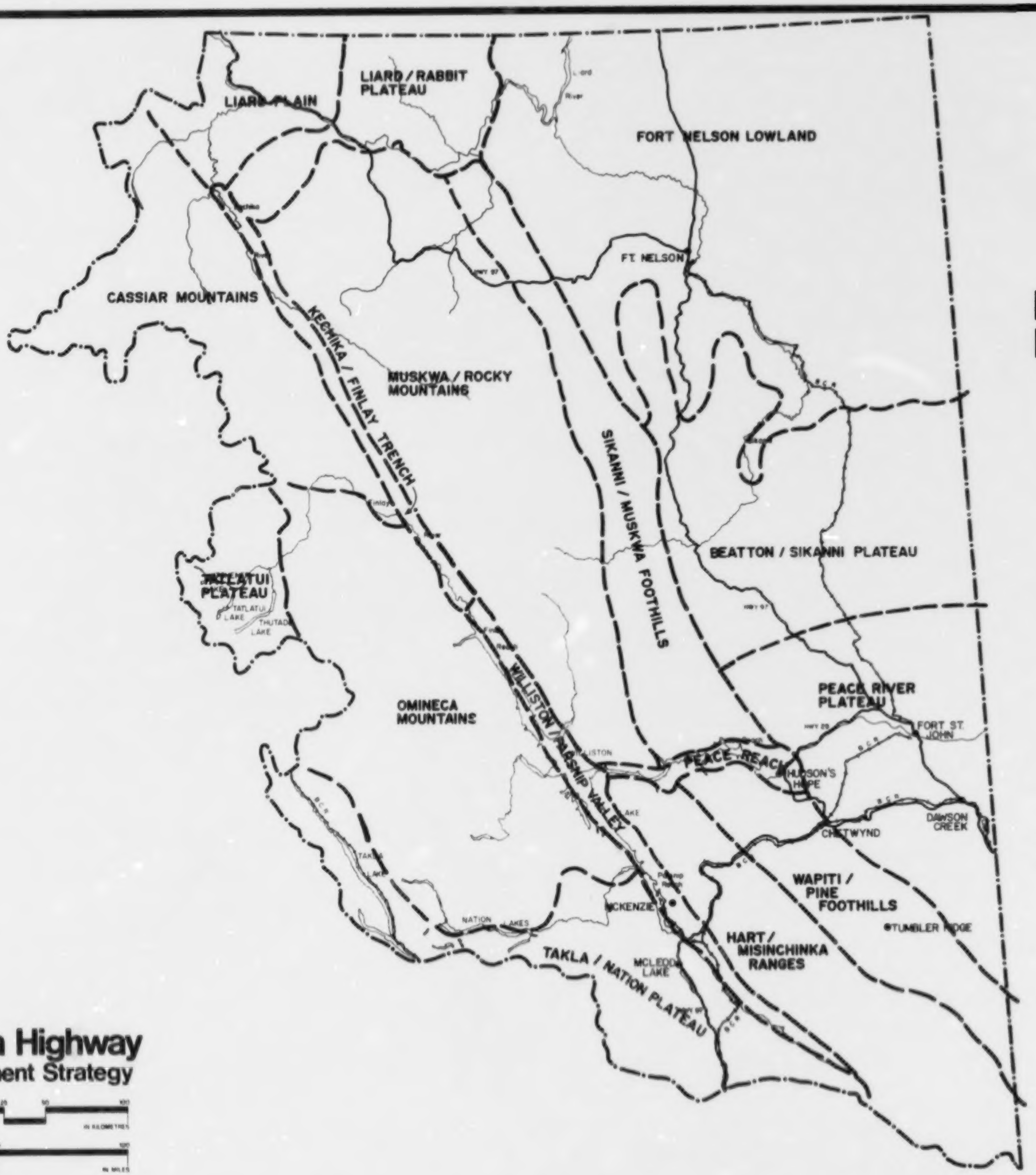
The natural resources of the Region are the essential elements and the basic planning considerations that define type, location and scale of most tourism developments and activities. In this chapter, various aspects of the natural resource base, which includes physiographic landform, water features, climate, vegatation, fish and wildlife, will be discussed in broad terms. Throughout the discussion, the importance of these facets to tourism and recreation development will be highlighted.

### 2.2.2 Geographic Description of Major Landform Units

The Region contains a considerable portion of the Eastern System and the eastern fringe of the Interior System of the Canadian Cordilleran physiographic region, an area of rugged mountains and plateaux. The eastern half of the Region is composed of the Alberta Plateau which is unique in British Columbia as it is the only intrusion of the Interior Plains into the province. See Drawing 1 for the location of the 16 landscape/planning units in the Region.

The Cassiar Mountains and the Omineca Mountains landscape/ planning units are topographically and geologically part of the same formation. However, they are separated by the through-valleys of the Chukachida River, Cushing Creek, Thudaka Creek and Finlay River. Peaks and ridges over 1,830 m (6,000 feet) are sharply scalloped by cirque glaciers whereas below 1,830 metres, ridges and summits are rounded as they were overridden by the ice sheet. Valleys have variable forms depending on the intensity of valley glaciation. Some are wide and flaring, e.g., north of the Turnagain River, while south of Sharktooth Mountain, they are narrow and steep-walled. A deep mantle of drift has been deposited in most valleys which are at a general elevation of 1,067 m to 1,372 m, thus

# Landscape / Planning Units


LIARD PLAIN
LIARD / RABBIT PLATEAU
Liard River
FORT NELSON LOWLAND
FT. NELSON
HWY 97
CASSIAR MOUNTAINS
KECHIKA / FINLAY TRENCH
MUSKWA / ROCKY MOUNTAINS
SIKANNI / MUSKWA FOOTHILLS
B.C.R.
Finlay
BEATTON / SIKANNI PLATEAU
TATLATUI PLATEAU
TATLATUI LAKE
THUTADE LAKE
HWY 97
PEACE RIVER PLATEAU
HWY 29
FORT ST. JOHN
OMINECA MOUNTAINS
WILLISTON / PARSNIP VALLEY
WILLISTON
PEACE REACH
HUDSON'S HOPE
B.C.R.
DAWSON CREEK
CHETWYND
LAKE
TAKLA LAKE
WAPITI / PINE FOOTHILLS
NATION LAKES
MCKENZIE
TUMBLER RIDGE
HART / MISINCHINKA RANGES
TAKLA / NATION PLATEAU
MCLEOD LAKE
HWY 97
B.C.R.

LEGEND

Landscape / Planning Unit Boundary

Regional Boundary

## Peace River/Alaska Highway
### Regional Tourism Development Strategy

1

SCALE IN KILOMETRES

SCALE IN MILES

THIS IS A WORKING DRAWING AND THE INFORMATION PORTRAYED HEREON IS INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE NATURE AND TYPE OF DATA EVALUATED AND DOES NOT NECESSARILY DISPLAY ALL INFORMATION AVAILABLE

2

2

2

the relief is often considerable. The highest peaks are in the Thudaka Range (2,713 m) of the Cassiar Mountains unit between Thudaka Creek and the Turnagain River and the Swannell Ranges (Fleet Mountain and Mount Cushing - 2,320 m) of the Omineca Mountains unit.

The Tatlatui Plateau unit is a southward extension of the larger Spatsizi Plateau into the Region. It is an area of wide, drift-filled valleys and open, gently rolling upland surfaces enclosed by mountains. Summits rise to 2,550 m (Melanistic Peak) and 2,150 m in Tatlatui Provincial Park above a general elevation of 1,250 m to 1,800 m. The unit also contains several scenic, elongate lakes - Kitchener, Tatlatui, Thutade - which occupy glacially gouged valleys.

The Takla/Nation Plateau unit is part of the northernmost extension of the Central Interior Plateau. It is an area of low relief lying at about 1,220 m to 1,525 m with expanses of gently rolling country. Depressions left by the ice formed Takla, Chuchi and Carp Lakes as well as numerous other smaller lakes and ponds. Visual interest is provided by glacial flutings, drumlins and meltwater channels. The Crooked River provides a pleasant 95 km canoe route with good wildlife viewing opportunities and the Nation Lakes chain (Chuchi, Tchentlo, Indata, Tsayta Lakes) partly in the neighbouring Omineca Mountains unit, provide a 140 km wilderness experience with scenic shoreline.

The Region contains the northern half of the Rocky Mountain Trench, a remarkable landform feature; a continuous straight valley 3.3 km to 15 km wide and 720 km long, the eastern wall of the trench is formed by the western front of the Rocky Mountains broken only by the Peace Reach and the western wall by the Nechako Plateau, the Omineca and Cassiar Mountains. The landform has been divided into two units: the Williston/Parsnip Valley section contains the reservoir formed by the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and the

Parsnip River valley; and the northern unit contains the south flowing Finlay River and the north flowing Kechika River. Williston Lake has been minimally developed for recreation as it is considered dangerous due to winds and floating debris. The timber in the valley was not cleared prior to flooding. The Kechika River in the northern unit of the trench provides a 320 km wilderness canoe route to the Liard River. The Kechika River is joined from the neighbouring Muskwa/Rocky Mountains unit by the Gataga River, an arduous 77 km white water canoe route. Wildlife viewing opportunities are good and sport fishing is also good in the rivers and lakes.

The Hart/Misinchinka Ranges unit, part of the Northern Rocky Mountains, are only moderately rugged when compared to the mountain groups to the north and south. North of Mount Sir Alexander (3,274 m) elevations do not exceed 2,287 m except for Mount Drysdale (2,424 m) and Sentinel Peak (2,500 m). The unit is crossed by Prince George to Fort St. John sections of the Hart Highway and the British Columbia Railroad via the Pine Pass (869 km). In this unit, the combination of relatively moderate elevation and relief, of different geological structure and of reduced alpine and valley glaciation, has resulted in a subdued alpine topography that is well suited to the extensive wilderness guiding/outfitting that is carried on there.

Northwards from the Peace Reach unit in the Muskwa/Rocky Mountains, summit elevations gradually increase from Mount McCusker (2,559 m) at the head of the Sikanni Chief River to Mount Churchill (3,200 m) at the head of the Churchill River 70 km south of the Alaska Highway. Longitudinal valleys of considerable width and length are prominent features of the unit which separate the upthrust mountain blocks. Glaciation in the unit was uneven in intensity. The high area around Mount Churchill, Mount Stalin (2,896 m) and Mount Lloyd George (2,918 m) was a local centre of accumulation from which glaciers moved along several major valleys.

Here, late stage alpine glaciation with cirques, arretes and matterhorn peaks, left its mark, while elsewhere, there is little or no evidence of continental or alpine glaciation. The former presence of an ice cover is revealed by the almost universal cover of glacial drift which occupies the valleys.

The unit is largely inaccessible by road except for the northeast corner where it is traversed by the Alaska Highway. The highway passes through scenic Stone Mountain and Muncho Lake Provincial Parks. The latter contains part of two ranges of upthrust, easterly tilted, fault blocks which present classic and impressive castellated limestone peaks. The most impressive mountain and alpine scenery occurs to the south around Mount Churchill.

Kwadacha Wilderness Park is contained in the centre of the unit, an intriguing area with narrow glacier fed lakes, glacier shrouded mountains and good wildlife viewing opportunities.

The Liard/Rabbit Plateau is a transitional unit between the Muskwa Ranges and the Liard Plain. It consists of low, wooded ridges and rounded flat-topped summits at an even elevation of between 1,220 m and 1,525 m. The ridges are separated at 457 m to 760 m by broad valleys and rivers (Grayling, Scatter, Crow and Kechika) and their tributaries to the Liard. An interesting stop along the Alaska Highway is the Liard River Hot Springs Park in which visitors can bathe in hot pools and observe plant species from more southerly areas that survive here only because of the special micro-climate. The Liard River provides an interesting and challenging canoe route through the unit, "the Grand Canyon of the Liard", which stretches from just east of the Hot Springs Park to near the confluence with the Toad River. This feature maybe threatened by another B.C. Hydro project.

The Liard Plain unit is a low area of slight relief ringed by mountains and plateaus. Surface elevations range between 762 m and 1,067 m. The Liard River and its tributary, the Kechika, meander through the unit, both providing canoeing opportunities.

The plain was completely covered by glacial ice which produced the existing subdued landform features. Bedrock and a deep layer of drift were shaped into drumlin-like forms and numerous depressions were gouged and are now filled by numerous small lakes and ponds. Eskers and other morainal features are occasionally seen.

The foothills are a transitional landform between the Rocky Mountains and the Interior Plains. The landform has been divided into two landscape/planning units (named after their major rivers) separated by the Peace Reach. However, they are structurally and geologically identical, the rock being folded along northwesterly trending axes and cut by southwesterly dipping fault lines. It is possible to divide the landform into a belt of inner foothills on the west and a belt of outer foothills on the east. The inner foothills are comprised of more closely folded and faulted resistant rocks resulting in higher and more rugged topography than the more moderate relief and subdued topography of the outer foothills. Thus, there is strong visual expression to the physiographic transition.

The elevations of summits and high longitudinal ridges range from 1,830 m to 2,134 m. Mount Laurier (2,351 m) in the Sikanni/Muskwa Foothills unit is the high point and general elevations are highest between the Prophet and Pine Rivers. Valleys, generally wide and flaring, lie at 610 m to 915 m producing variable and moderate relief. Both units are quite scenic with the succession of wooded valleys and ridges. The Wapiti/Pine Foothills unit is traversed by the Hart Highway and several resource roads and is therefore reasonably accessible by vehicle. The Sikanni/Muskwa Foothills unit is crossed by the Alaska Highway but has few other means of road access, and consequently retains a remote wilderness character.

The Peace Reach unit separates the two foothill landscape/planning units. It is comprised of the drowned valley of the Peace River; the Peace was once the only navigable river to cross the Rockies, part of a spectacular, scenic canoe route through the Rockies and Foothills. The main attraction now is the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and generating station near Hudson's Hope as the floating logs and deadheads make boating and canoeing in the Reach somewhat risky.

The three easternmost landscape/planning units are part of the Interior Plains physiographic region. In terms of landform, there are two subdivisions: the Alberta Plateau, which has been divided into two units; and the Fort Nelson Lowland, which comprises the northern unit.

The Beatton/Sikanni Plateau and Peace River Plateau surface is flat or gently rolling, generally between 915 m and 1,220 m with a section between the Prophet and Muskwa Rivers rising to 1,525 m. Drainage results in large areas of muskeg and many streams and rivers (Beatton, Halfway, Pine, Kiskatinaw) which meander before joining the Peace River. The plateau units have low key surface features, generally derived from Pleistocene glaciation, e.g., moraines, fluting, drumlins and the incision of the rivers into the plateau surface. Most of the plateau is heavily wooded but in the vicinity of the Peace River, generally below 762 m it is only lightly wooded with aspen parklands. Much of this area has recently been cleared for cultivation as it is part of Canada's last agricultural frontier.

The Fort Nelson Lowland is a flat to gently rolling surface of low relief below the 610 m contour and small lakes and muskeg abound. The Fort Nelson and Petitot Rivers are incised as much as 152 m below the general level, offering the greatest visual variety.

### 2.2.3 General Climatic Characteristics

The Region's climate is controlled by two major forces: the dominance of Arctic Air masses descending from the Yukon and Northwest Territories and the latitude which means temperatures are generally cold; and the rainshadow effects of a successsion of mountain ranges, leaves the Region with an annual precipitation which does not exceed 100 cm and generally amounts to less than 75 cm except for the Rocky Mountain ranges south of Hudson's Hope.

The humid continental climate dominates the southern ranges of the Rocky Mountains in the Region with cold winters, short cool summers and from 100 to 200 cm of precipitation, much of it falling as snow.

The land to the south and north of the Omineca River is part of the Interior Continental climate with cold winters and rather dry, short, cool summers as shown by the statistics for Germansen Landing: the July mean temperature is 13.9°C, January mean temperature is -17.2°C, and annual precipitation is 52.5 cm, about half falling as snow.

In the western foothills of the Rocky Mountains north of the Peace Reach, altitude and lattitude combine to form the Northern Interior Continental Zone with long, cold winters and short, cool summers, and only 50 to 75 cm of precipitation. The high areas (over 1,830 m) of the Cassiar, Omineca and Muskwa Rocky Mountains have alpine climates.

The eastern edge of the foothills units and the three units of the Alberta Plateau are part of the Northern Plains Zone with long, cold winters and short, warm summers and low precipitation. Conditions are typified by Fort Nelson and Fort St. John readings:

| | July Mean | January Mean | Annual Precipitation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fort Nelson | 16.7°C | -23°C | 44.6 cm |
| Fort St. John | 16.1°C | -17°C | 45.0 cm |

In general, the Region is cool, with a brief warm weather season and long cold winters. Thus, conditions are suited to vigorous outdoor activities and warm clothing must be at hand even in the summer as cold temperatures are not uncommon. The tourism season must include the shoulder months, which are comfortably cool, in order to have a reasonable operating period. While winter conditions can be bitter, proper clothing and an awareness of climatic idiosyncracies could prepare hardy tourists for winter adventures.

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the important season lengths of representative climatic stations throughout the Region.

### 2.2.4 Vegetation

Despite the large area of the Region, there are only five major biogeoclimatic zones. The diminution of vegetative diversity is due to the fact that there are fewer plant species and plant associations able to thrive in the cooler climates.

The vast majority of the Region, including the three units of the Interior Plains, is dominated by the Boreal White and Black Spruce Zone. It also occurs extensively at lower elevations (165 m to 880 m) of main valleys of the Rockies, in the Omineca and Cassiar Mountains, the Liard Plain and the Liard/Rabbit Plateau units.

## TABLE 1

## SUMMER TOURISM SEASON FOR SELECTED CENTRES

| Centre | Summer Begins | High Summer Begins | High Summer Ends | Summer Ends | Season Duration<br>Summer | Season Duration<br>High Summer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beatton River | May 5 | June 29 | Aug. 17 | Sept. 26 | 145 | 50 |
| Dawson Creek | Apr. 28 | May 31 | Aug. 31 | Oct. 14 | 170 | 93 |
| Fort Nelson | May 2 | May 28 | Aug. 31 | Sept. 25 | 147 | 96 |
| Fort St. John | May 2 | June 1 | Aug. 26 | Oct. 2 | 154 | 87 |
| Smith River | May 14 | June 23 | Aug. 22 | Sept. 15 | 125 | 61 |
|  | (daily average temperature first exceeds 18°C) | (daily average maximum temp. continuously above 18°C) |  | (daily average max. temp. falls below 18°C for first time) |  |  |

Source: Climatic Suitability for Recreation in British Columbia, R.C. Bennett, Resource Analysis Branch, Ministry of the Environment, Victoria, 1977.

## TABLE 2

## WINTER TOURISM SEASON FOR SELECTED CENTRES

| Centre | Winter Begins | Deep Winter Begins | Deep Winter Ends | Winter Ends | Season Duration Winter | Season Duration Deep Winter |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beatton River | Sept. 26 | Oct. 24 | Apr. 14 | May 3 | 220 | 173 |
| Dawson Creek | Oct. 6 | Nov. 10 | Apr. 2 | May 3 | 210 | 144 |
| Fort Nelson | Oct. 7 | Oct. 21 | Apr. 8 | Apr. 27 | 203 | 170 |
| Fort St. John | Oct. 17 | Oct. 31 | Apr. 2 | Apr. 27 | 193 | 154 |
| Smith River | Oct. 17 | Oct. 17 | Apr. 14 | May 2 | 217 | 180 |
|  | (daily average temperature first falls below 0°C) | (daily average of mean temp. continuously below 0°C) |  | (daily average temperature falls below 0°C for last time) |  |  |

Source: Climatic Suitability for Recreation in British Columbia,
R.C. Bennett, Resource Analysis Branch,
Ministry of the Environment, Victoria, 1977.

White spruce, black spruce, lodgepole pine, tamarac, balsam poplar and paper birch are the major tree species of the forested parts of the zone. Forest fires are frequent throughout the zone maintaining nearly all the forests in an early successional stage. Extensive grassland and parkland communities occur along the southern Peace River area. Relatively open lodgepole pine - lichen forests occur on the driest sites with dense black spruce-moss (muskeg) communities developing on imperfectly drained habitats. Overall, the zone is a mosaic of forest and bog communities which provides excellent moose habitat and this attracts many hunters to the zone. There is increasing commercial utilization of forests in this northerly zone and will likely continue in the future as production of wood and wood products increases in centres such as MacKenzie, Chetwynd, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek.

Recreational/tourism use in the zone is largely confined to the lakes and rivers as the tree density and poor drainage conditions make overland travel difficult in the plateau, plain and lowland areas.

The Spruce-Willow-Birch Zone (SWB) is a subalpine zone that occurs in the northern part of the province. In the southern edge of the Region (and most of the southern two-thirds of the province) in the Hart/Misinchinka Ranges and the southern Omineca Mountains, the Englemann Spruce - Subalpine Fir Zone occupies the 950 m to 1,550 m elevations. Englemann spruce and subalpine fir (also known as alpine fir) mixed with white spruce are the characteristic climax trees throughout the zone and are able to withstand the relatively severe winters. Lodgepole pine is common over large areas especially after disturbances such as forest fires. However, north of about 57°N latitude, the persistent frosts inhibit most conifer growth and the SWB Zone occupies the same altitudinal band (900 m to 1,500 m). Winters are severe with moderate snow cover and with continuous permafrost in the northern half of the Region.

Comprehensive plant studies have yet to be carried out in British Columbia; however, information from the SWB Zone in the Yukon indicates that white spruce is commonly found in rich, well drained soils and black spruce on poor, imperfectly drained soils at lower elevations. Persistent frosts, common above the 1,200 m level, effect the continuance of the conifers and willow and birch shrubs predominate. This zone is too far north and too low a level of productivity to be able to support logging activity. Its major recreational value is the wildlife habitat present for big game species such as moose, stone sheep, caribou and bear. The remoteness and poor recreational climate mean that the zone is rarely used for tourism purposes except for brief visits by hunters or hikers. Further, the vegetation could likely tolerate only extensive types of use.

In the southern edge of the Region in the Takla/Nation Plateau unit, the Williston Lake Trench and the lower elevations (below 950 m) of the Omineca Mountains, is the Sub-Boreal Spruce Zone (SBS). It is a transition zone as the winters are somewhat shorter and the growing season slightly longer than in the true boreal zone.

Upland coniferous forests are composed mainly of white spruce (the dominant climax species) the lodgepole pine as well as deciduous forests of trembling aspen dominating the landscape. Fire and other disturbances result in forest stands with variable age and composition. Black spruce bogs are common but are not nearly as extensive as in the boreal forest.

The zone is being logged extensively, largely for pulpwood. Conflicts with tourism use, which are generally of a visual nature, could be reduced by designating appropriate sized reserves (e.g., 120 to 180 m) along travel corridors, lakes and rivers to mask the clear-cut areas. The zone provides good areas for hiking, trail riding and hunting moose and mule deer in the upland areas and the lakes and rivers provide good canoeing and boating opportunities. Vegetation tolerance to these extensive forms of use is high.

The Alpine Tundra Zone (AT) is the fifth major biogeoclimatic zone of the Region. This zone starts at about 1,500 to 1,600 m elevation and as low as 1,000 m in the northernmost units where it emerges from the SWB Zone. It is a cold, windy, snowy environment with a very short frost-free period consisting of treeless meadows, slopes, windswept ridges, snowfields and icefields at high elevations in mountainous terrain. Most alpine vegetation species show specific adaptations for typically harsh conditions -- permafrost, a short growing season, abrasion from wind-blown snow particles and the dessicating effects of winds. At the highest elevations and near glaciers only lichens and a few mosses can survive.

In the Rocky Mountain Foothills, the variety of topography, slope, aspect and drainage produces a visually appealing mosaic of forest associations even though the diversity of species is considerably reduced when compared with more southerly areas. Thus, the vegetative cover is a positive element in the landscape. In contrast, in the three Interior Plains units where most tourism travel occurs, the vegetation of the boreal forest often presents a dreary and constant character. The river floodplains, marshes, aspen hummocks and the aspen parkland of the Peace River provide much needed visual variety in a generally flat landform.

There are 12 Ecological Reserves in the Region totalling 6,945 ha which protect unique or representative examples of landforms and ecosystems. The reserves preserve many transitional and limited ecological communities that exist between north temperate and boreal life zones.

### 2.2.5 Wildlife Resources

Vast areas of the Region are still relatively undisturbed, consequently there are considerable wildlife populations. (This is changing rapidly, with oil and gas exploration and increased forest utilization). These two factors (i.e., wilderness and wildlife) have generally served as the main reasons for tourist visitation. It must be pointed out, however, that the large ungulates (except the caribou and moose) are approaching the northern limits of their range and they are under constant physiological stress due to cold winter temperatures, the short growing season and a limited food supply. Hence, overall numbers are low as are broader population densities. Large numbers of animals often concentrate in specific areas with favourable habitat, e.g., abundant food and shelter, especially in winter and they are very susceptible to disturbance. Human alteration of these areas and/or a succession of severe winters can mean drastic population crashes. While the presence and size of the wildlife populations provide good opportunities for consumptive and nonconsumptive use, from a tourism standpoint, they are also extremely vulnerable and require sensitive management.

Mule deer are spread thinly in a broad area, generally south of the 59th parallel, east of the Rocky Mountains and south of the Peace Reach and the Nation Lakes chain. The main centre of abundance occurs in Peace River Plateau unit, especially along the valleys of the Peace, Pine, Murray, Moberley, Halfway and Beatton Rivers. The white-tailed deer are also generally concentrated in the same areas of the Peace River Plateau unit. This species has appeared in this part of British Columbia only in the last 30 years, expanding its range and increasing browse in response to the disturbances of mature forests and intrusion of human activities.

Elk are found in scattered, isolated pockets in parts of the Rocky Mountain Trench and the Peace River Valley. Concentrations are found in the Muskwa River drainage area of the foothills and in the southeast corner of the Peace River Plateau unit along the Murray River and the Alberta border where they are part of a larger population that inhabits the Southern Foothills.

Caribou are found throughout the mountainous areas of the Region. They are considerably less numerous in the plateau units in the south and north and are very thinly spread through the boreal forests of the Fort Nelson Lowland and the Alberta Plateau units.

Moose are the most numerous large ungulate of the northern part of the province found everywhere but at the highest elevations. They are most numerous in the low and intermediate elevations of the mountain river valleys, the foothils units, the Liard Plain, Liard/Rabbit Plateau, the Takla/Nation Plateau units, the Peace River and Beatton/Sikanni Plateau units and the western edge of the Fort Nelson Lowland.

Mountain goats are relatively numerous throughout the middle and high elevations of the mountainous units of the Region, e.g., Cassiar, Omineca, Muskwa/Rocky Mountains. They are absent from the Hart/Misinchinka Ranges except for the highest elevations in the south of the unit.

Stone sheep, a favoured trophy animal, are found in the rugged and mountainous areas north of the Peace River in the Muskwa/Rocky Mountains, the Cassiar Mountains, the Tatlatui Plateau and the adjacent areas of the Omineca Mountains.

Carnivores, such as the grizzly and black bear (and its brown phase), are found throughout the Region. The grizzly prefer the more rugged and remote terrain of the mountain and foothill units and are much less numerous east of the foothills. The black bear, with adaptable and opportunistic habits, are evenly distributed in mountain, plateau, lowland and the plain units.

Wolf range freely throughout the Region and are commonly found in all but the highest elevations of the Rocky Mountains and around the settled areas of Fort St. John and Dawson Creek. The coyote is also found throughout the Region in parklands, alpine meadows and "edge" habitat. The normal range has been expanded in recent years with increased disturbance from human activities.

Cougar, at the extreme northern edge of their range, are scarce in the Region and are generally found only in the Peace River and Beatton/Sikanni Plateau units, the foothills units south of Sikanni Chief River, the Hart/Misinchinka Ranges and the Takla/Nation Plateau units where mule and/or white-tailed deer are present. Bobcat are present in the foothill, mountain and valley units south of the Peace Reach; they too, are at their northern limit. Lynx are numerous throughout the forested plateau, mountain, foothill and lowland units.

Vast areas of the Interior Plains have excellent waterfowl habitat; literally tens of thousands of ducks, geese and swans stopover on their twice yearly migratory flights, many thousands of ducks and geese stay to nest in the multitude of marshes and potholes of the grasslands and lowlands.

The small mammal populations are quite large as they have a high reproductive capacity and several rodent species (e.g., snowshoe hares, lemmings) have cyclical population fluctuations. There are species which are specific to mountains and plateaus (hoary marmot, Siberian lemming), the boreal forest (least chipmunk, bog lemming), and prairie parklands (woodchuck, heather vole) that inhabit these habitat types. Most species, however, are commonly found throughout the Region, e.g., red squirrel, flying squirrel, beaver, deer mouse, wood rat, redback vole, meadow vole, muskrat, jumping mice, porcupine, marten, fisher, short-tailed weasel, striped skunk and river otter.

Big game hunting is an important tourism activity in this Region which supported 39.7% of the total non-resident hunting activity, more than any other region in the province. These hunters spent $4.2 million dollars in the Region, almost half of the total non-resident hunting expenditures in the province.1) The skills of the region's over 70 licensed guides have led to the highest success rate and the most game harvested of all regions. The Region hosted the highest average number of hunters per guide, while the 71 guides constitute the greatest number of guides per region, in the province (1977 figures).2)

Resident hunting is less important in the Region, with 11.6% of the total provincial resident hunting.3)

The above figures are based upon the Omineca-Peace Resource Management Region which is roughly twice as large as the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region and includes the eastern portion of the Yellowhead 16 Tourism Region. Therefore the level of hunting by residents is probably less than that indicated by the above figures, especially since the population of this entire Tourism Region is approximately 65,000 compared to the 78,000 people (1979 estimate) in Prince George alone (Yellowhead 16 Tourism Region) for example. However, the figures concerning non-resident hunting are probably quite accurate because this Region is world famous for its wildlife, big game hunting, and wilderness.

### 2.2.6 Sport Fishery

The Region's lakes and rivers support a sport fishery of both warm water and cold water species. The most common warm water fish is the northern pike. It is a voracious feeder found in the Peace River system as far upstream as Hudson's Hope and in the Muskwa, Kechika and Liard Rivers. The walleye or pickerel is found in the rivers of the Peace system (e.g., Beatton, Kiskatinaw) east of the Rocky Mountains and in the Liard River system including the Fort Nelson, Muskwa and Kechika Rivers.

Rainbow trout are found in the cold waters of the Peace River system west of the foothills and plateau unit boundary, e.g., the Finlay and Parsnip Rivers and their tributaries, e.g., Omineca, Nation, Kwadacha. It is absent from the Liard system.

The two main species of char are the lake trout and the Dolly Varden. The former is found in the deep, cold lakes of the Peace and Liard systems, e.g., Muncho, Moberley, Summit (in Stone Mountain Park), Arctic; the Dolly Varden are generally found in all lakes and rivers of the Region.

Arctic grayling are found in the clear, cold streams and lakes of the Region, e.g., Dease, Liard, Fort Nelson, Kechika, Finlay, Parsnip and Peace systems. They are very susceptible to disruption of their stream habitat.

Pacific salmon are absent from the Region except for the extreme south where there are a few rivers such as the Salmon, that are tributary to the Fraser River. Two species, the lake whitefish and the burbot, are often netted for human and dog food, however, they may become more important, especially as part of the winter sport fishery.

In the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region, sport fishing has limited importance as a tourist activity, although it appears to be gaining popularity. The Region's had in 1980, 11 fishing camps, six fishing resorts, and three other relevant operations constitute only five per cent of the total commercial fishing operations in the province.4) Non-resident fishermen accounted for 37,150 angling days, eight per cent of the provincial total, and spent an average of $49 per angler per angler day. Resident fishermen pursued 484,300 angling days, about 12% of the provincial total, and spent $26,30 per angler day.5) The total income for commercial fishing operations in 1978 from resident and non-resident fishermen was $480,730.6) Although there are only 10 licensed fishing/small game guides in such an immense region, they constitute the third largest number of guides per region and have the third largest average number of anglers per guide per season (25.1).[7] As with the hunting activity, these figures are based on the Omineca Peace Resource Management Region. This management region includes the lakes district northwest of Prince George which is famous for sport fishing but which is outside of the Peace River/Alaska Highway Tourism Region. Therefore the figures for both resident and non-resident fishing are more likely to be one-third to one-half less than those presented above.

### 2.2.7 Natural Resources Summary

As discussed in the preceding sections it is clear that the Region has a considerable range of natural attractions and capabilities that are popular with both residents and visitors. Most tourism/recreation amenities are concentrated in the southeastern portion of the Region, especially in the Peace River Plateau unit, as this is the area that has the greatest resident population and the best de road access. Except for the above mentioned unit and some limited water and land-based areas in the Peace Reach, Williston/Parsnip Valley and Takla/Nation Plateau landscape/planning units, the remainder of the Region has a very low degree of tourism development. The existing uses of the poorly accessible units are focused on extensive activities related to hunting guide outfitter operations and occasional wilderness recreationists. The main constraints to intensive development are the limited and difficult access (which is a positive factor for some people, especially the big game hunters), the ruggedness of much of the terrain, the short duration of the warm weather season and the severity of much of the cold weather season. Active large scale utilization of the timber and hydro power resources and oil and natural gas drilling with their pervasive visual and environmental disruptions are problems in many areas as well. Future projects which will also have considerable impact on the tourism/recreation capabilities of the Region include further hydro development on the Peace River, dam construction on the Liard River and open pit mining on the northeast coal block. Environmental studies are presently being undertaken to measure values and isolate issues of concern for consideration in future planning.

Virtually all of the mountain, plateau and foothill landscape/planning units have rugged, scenic landscapes along with considerable river and/or lake resources that provide them with considerable recreation/tourism potential. The Omineca, Cassiar, Muskwa Rocky Mountains, Sikanni/Muskwa Foothills, the Tatlatui Plateau and Hart/Misinchinka Ranges are well suited to wilderness types of activities because of the undisturbed nature of vast areas.

In terms of consumptive recreation the big game populations are of sufficient size and quality to support considerable regional resident, British Columbia and non-resident hunting activity. The harshness of the environment, however, makes populations quite vulnerable. Thus protection of wildlife habitat and careful monitoring and management of populations is required to maintain healthy populations in the face of existing hunting pressures and habitat losses from resource extraction activities. The sport fish resources in the accessible parts of the Region are also under considerable pressure from anglers, both resident and visitors. More intensive management and catch regulation is also required if fish stocks are to continue to provide the quality angling opportunities expected by regional residents and tourists. Means should be provided for increased viewing opportunities of waterfowl populations and large ungulate species to enhance the visitor's experience.

Williston Lake could have considerable potential as a recreation attraction despite its drawbacks. The boating, shoreline recreation, fishing and hunting capabilities are quite significant if access could be improved. The MacKenzie area and Hudson's Hope area could become major water-based recreational nodes if boat launch, picnic and camping areas were developed. These opportunities will assume greater importance as the reservoir is cleaned up and regional population and tourist visitation increases.

## 2.3 Physical Tourism Resources (Infrastructure)

### 2.3.1 Introduction

Physical tourism resources are those structures and environments constructed by man to provide the tourist with necessary amenities. They are an integral part of a tourism development plan and, to a large extent, influence the character, quality and diversity of the visitors experience. In order to understand the nature, quality and availability of the physical resources, an inventory and analysis was undertaken which identified the existing infrastructure on both a regional and landscape/planning unit basis. Categories included recreational lands and facilities, accommodation, transportation modes and corridors, and tourist service centres.

### 2.3.2 Recreational Land and Facilities

The Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region encompasses an interesting array of landforms and water features, consisting primarily of two major mountain systems including an extensive reservoir and a series of plains and plateaux interspersed with small lakes and rivers. There are a variety of large and small river systems, with the major one, the Peace, intercepted for power projects, while the second major river, the Liard, is being examined for similar harnessing. There are numerous other rivers flowing through mountainous as well as flatter terrain with a sizeable area of muskeg existing in the northeast.

Recreation/tourism capability for the Region is greatest for the water-based resources. The lakes, reservoir and river systems are the focus of most visitor outdoor activity in the accessible plateau and mountain areas, as well as in the remote mountain areas. The land-based activities such as hunting and wilderness hiking generally require air transportation or backcountry travel. Many of the water resources are accessible and close to travel and service centres while there are also many lake and river resources with very limited access. Some of the most spectacular settings are accessible only by boat, float plane, helicopter, foot or horseback which indicates the region would have considerable appeal for the adventure recreation market.

Most of the Region is comprised of Provincial Crown Land and Provincial Forest with several significant areas designated by various agencies for recreational and fish and wildlife purposes, although little development has occurred. There are also vast areas of Crown Land with no designated recreational function that nonetheless have an important recreational role as they are used in an extensive and often unstructured manner for wildlife viewing, guided and non-guided hunting and fishing, trail riding and photography. The recreational lands and facilities discussed in this section are, or could be, major tourism attractions, such as the provincial parks, or are of a quality that would attract tourists to the Region or that support significant tourism use (such as the big game populations). Municipal facilities were generally not considered in this plan because of the scope of the study and because they are primarily developed for local residents' use.

#### 2.3.2.1 Provincial Parks

The Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region includes 24 parks, four recreation areas, and two park reserves, totalling 419,078 ha, 9.2% of the provincial total. These parks range from one hectare to 167,540 ha in size (Table 3) and contain 752 campsites, 7.8% of the provincial total: five parks offer wilderness camping opportunities; Carp Lake, Kwadacha Wilderness, Tatlatui, Muncho Lake, and Stone

## TABLE 3

## 1980 PROVINCIAL PARK FACILITY INVENTORY

| Park | Class | Area (Hectare) | # of Camp-Sites | Wilderness Camping | Day Use | Devel-oped Beach (m) | Boat Launch Ramp | Hiking & x-c ski Trails (km) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beatton | A | 312 | - | - | X | 300 | - | 10 |
| Buckinghorse River Wayside | A | 55 | 30 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Carp Lake | A | 19,344 | 75 | X | X | - | X | 3 |
| Charlie Lake | A | 92 | 58 | - | X | - | X | 1 |
| Crooked River | A | 1,016 | 90 | - | X | 457 | - | 22 |
| Dunlevy | R.A. | 110 | - | - | X | - | X | - |
| East Pine Boat Launch | R | - | - | - | X | - | X | - |
| Fort McLeod Historic | A | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Fort Nelson Centennial | C | 8 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Fort St. John Historical | C | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Gwillim Lake | R.A. | 9,186 | - | - | X | - | - | - |
| Hyland River | A | 34 | 31 | - | X | - | - | - |
| Jack Fish Lake | R.A. | 174 | 35 | - | - | 200 | X | - |
| Kiskatinaw | A | 58 | 28 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Kledo Creek | A | 6 | 23 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Kwadacha Wilderness | A | 167,540 | - | X | - | - | - | - |
| Laird River Hot Springs | A | 668 | 21 | - | X | - | - | 1 |
| Moberly Lake | A | 98 | 59 | - | X | 305 | X | 1 |
| Muncho Lake | B | 88,433 | 113 | X | X | - | - | - |
| One Fifteen Creek | R | 51 | 8 | - | - | - | - | - |
| One Island Creek | A | 61 | 30 | - | - | 150 | X | - |
| Prophet River | R.A. | 115 | 45 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Racing River Wayside | A | 71 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Spencer Tuck | A | 5 | - | - | X | 61 | X | - |
| Stone Mountain | B | 25,685 | 10 | X | X | - | - | - |
| Sudeten | A | 5 | 15 | - | X | - | - | - |
| Swan Lake | A | 67 | 10 | - | X | - | X | - |
| Tatlatui | A | 105,826 | - | X | X | - | X | - |
| Taylor Landing | A | 1 | - | - | X | - | X | - |
| Whisker's Point | A | 52 | 71 | - | X | 311 | X | - |
| TOTALS | | 419,078 | 752 | | | 1,784 | | 38 |

Source: B.C. Parks Branch

Mountain Parks. The Region has 1,784 m of developed beach, 3.3% of the provincial total, and 38 km of hiking and cross-country skiing trails, 1.7% of the provincial total. It is apparent that although the Region has a high percentage of provincial park land, most of it is undeveloped for formal recreational uses.

Day-use of parks has increased dramatically while overnight use has declined, an anomaly compared to other regions in the province. Day-use increased from 79,330 party days in 1978 to 121,124 party days in 1979, an increase of 52.7%. As a proportion of the total provincial day-use, the Region's day-use showed a much smaller increase, from three per cent in 1978 to 3.5% in 1979. Crooked River, Swan Lake, Moberly Lake, and Charlie Lake Parks had the greatest volume of day-use. Much of this increase in day-use may be attributed to the rapid growth of the Fort St. John/Dawson Creek populations.

Overnight use declined appreciably from 42,456 party nights in 1978 to 35,650 party nights in 1979, a decrease of 16%. As a porportion of the total provincial overnight use the decline in camping experienced by the Region's parks was smaller, from 7.4% in 1978 to 5.4% in 1979. Carp Lake, Crooked River, Moberly Lake, and Charlie Lake are the most highly developed and accessible and received the most overnight use. For the Region as a whole, 57% of the campers were from British Columbia, 25% from the rest of Canada, and 18% from the United States. Compared to the provincial averages, these figures show that the Region serves a higher proportion of non-residents (25% from other provinces compared to 20% in other regions and 18% from the United States versus 9%) than the other tourism regions.8)

Aside from the popular intensive use activities the provincial parks provide, they are important for their landscape and scenic protection roles, and for wildlife habitat preservation and interpretive values. The British Columbia Provincial Parks also provide numerous opportunities for extensive and physically challenging activities such as hiking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing and nature study, which are becoming increasingly popular with residents and tourists alike. Few of the larger parks in this Region are developed to encourage these activities or are located in areas readily accessible to tourists. It is important to acknowledge that provincial parks provide some of the best places in which to engage in active outdoor recreation even in a region with large areas of Provincial Crown Land where active recreation can occur.

The British Columbia Forest Service also provides outdoor recreation opportunities of a dispersed nature and typically provides informal, rustic facilities. Their purpose is to provide forest recreation sites (camping, picnicking, boat/canoe launching areas) largely for use by regional residents although it is recognized that appreciable non-resident use occurs. Presently, most recreation sites are concentrated around Kinusea Falls and its access road, and a few others are scattered along the Hart and Alaska Highway corridors.

### 2.3.2.2 Proposed Park System Expansion

The projects proposed or under development for the region's provincial park system entail expanding and/or improving facilities for tourists and residents. They can be summarized as: expanding tourist related facilities (day-use areas, campgrounds, trails) along the Alaska Highway particularly in Beatton, Liard River Hotsprings, Muncho Lake, and Stone Mountain Parks; increasing the outdoor recreation opportunities for the residents of Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, and Fort St. John by developing more facilities; creating a major new park at Monkman Pass and several other smaller parks (e.g., Tuchodi Lakes, Horseranch Range); and establishing proposals for the recreational use and development of the Site One and Site C (B.C. Hydro) reservoirs.

The Ministry of Forests, Recreation Division, is planning to expand its efforts in the Region by means of a five year program which begins with an inventory of suitable and available sites, and collection and analysis of demand data. This preliminary analysis will provide the basis for strategic planning for the provision of additional camping/picnicking units, summer and winter-use trails.

### 2.3.2.3 Camping Opportunities

Camping opportunities are provided by the Parks Branch, the Forest Service, and several private enterprises. Of the Region's 29 provincial parks, 18 contain 752 sites with varying levels of facilities and attractiveness. Of these, the seven Wayside Rest Areas offer very minimal facilities and are poorly designed and maintained, although they are heavily used. On the other hand, parks such as Stone Mountain and Liard River Hotsprings are inherently attractive but have few camping opportunities; Stone Mountain has 10 sites while Liard has 21 sites. Still other parks, Moberly and Charlie, for example, have many attractive facilities but are mainly used by residents.

The Forest Service manages 22 recreation sites containing 400 campsites. However, most of their sites are in the Kinuseo Falls area, about 136 km southwest of Dawson Creek off the main highway and only a few are located along the Alaska and Hart Highways. Similar to those of the Parks Branch, basic facilities are provided such as a fire box, table, pit toilets and tent/trailer pad. The combination of too few public camping opportunities in some places and the unattractive facilities at others, does not encourage tourists to spend several days in the Region exploring the parks and other attractions.

The Region's 19 commercial campgrounds provide over 600 sites located near urban centres and along the highways. A full range of services is provided including electrical, water, and sewage hook-ups for trailers and recreational vehicles, and the larger establishments often have showers, laundry facilities, and general stores. Commercial campgrounds provide an important part of the accommodation needs of the Region, especially in the warm weather season, when there are considerable volumes of tourists passing through the Region using recreational vehicles.

### 2.3.2.4 Recreational Boating

Situated in the spectacular northern Rocky Mountains with hundreds of kilometres of shoreline to explore, the Williston and Peace Canyon reservoirs provide opportunities for recreational power boating. Public boat launches are provided on Dunbury Arm, and private facilities are available at Portage Mountain Yacht Club (Hudson's Hope), both giving access to Williston reservoir. B.C. Hydro has recently constructed launching facilities on the Peace Canyon Reservoir. Most boating takes place in the Peace Reach (Williston reservoir) west of Hudson's Hope and jet boat charters are also available.

The two reservoirs' suitability for boating is limited because the periodic drawdowns and floating debris create problems related to visual appeal, boating safety and access to the shoreline. These problems can be partially mitigated in the future through B.C. Hydro and Parks Branch proposals for the recreational use and development of the reservoirs.

The Peace River also provides opportunities for power boating, as do other rivers in the Region such as the Pine, Murray, and Fort Nelson. Public boat launches at Lynx Creek and Hudson's Hope give access to the Peace River. Access to others can be had at those points where highways and secondary roads intersect the rivers. Jet boat charters on the Peace River are available for tourists.

### 2.3.2.5 Special Active Tourism/Recreation Activities

The rugged landforms and the variety of land and water interfaces provide opportunities for a variety of active pursuits of interest to tourists. Some of the activities include big game hunting, fishing, skiing, canoeing/kayaking, and winter related sports.

This Region is world famous for its big game hunting. It hosted the province's largest proportion of non-resident hunters (39.7%) during the 1978-79 season, indicating an international clientele, and the second largest number of resident hunters.

There are over 70 licensed guide outfitters which lead hunting expeditions for moose, mountain goat, black and grizzly bear, mountain sheep, elk, caribou, wolf, and deer. Moose are the most popular and most successfully hunted while deer and wolf are the least. The non-resident hunters made $4.2 million in expenditures (1977 figures) clearly illustrating that big game hunting is a major tourism feature in the Region, and a contributor to the regional economy.9)

The Region is also well known for its sport fishing. Guided fishing trips can be arranged but they are not as popular as guided hunting trips. There are a number of facilities including over 10 fishing camps, six fishing resorts, and three other related operations which provide information, access, and other services for tourists and residents. Non-residents spent 37,150 fishermen days or 7.7% of the provincial total and contributed approximately $1 million to the regional economy through expenditures (1976-77 figures).10)

In addition to the jet boat tours on Williston Reservoir and Peace River, other rivers offer many opportunities for canoeing and kayaking. The following rivers are considered to have tourism potential because of their physical characteristics and accessibility by vehicle.11) (See Appendix 2 for River Grading System).

Beatton River - B.C.R. crossing to Peace River, 4 days

East Pine River - East Pine to Taylor - natural river, 2 to 3 days.

Fort Nelson River - Fort Nelson to Fort Liard, 4 to 5 days.

Halfway River - Pink Mountain to Attachie.

Murray River - Kinuseo Falls to Highway 97.

Muskwa River - Fly-in access, two to three days.

Peace River - Hudson's Hope to Taylor - recreational river, 3 days.

Prophet River - Fort Nelson to Prophet River Crossing.

Those listed below have been canoed by experts and would be suitable for tourists depending upon the expertise of the canoeists.[12)]

Carp Lake - 1 day to 1 week.

Crooked River - Summit Lake to McLeod settlement, recreational river, 2 to 4 days.

Gataga River - Kechika River - wild river, 10 to 14 days.

While there are no commercial river rafting operations (at present) in this Region, the Liard River has been explored and identified as having commercial rafting potential. The Dease and Lower Kechika Rivers are as yet unexplored but are believed to have commercial rafting potential as well.[13)]

Situated in Pine Pass, northeast of MacKenzie, Azu Ski Village is the major downhill ski area in the Region. With a vertical drop of 366 m (and potential for 823 m) and large snowfalls (168 cm), it has excellent conditions particularly for powder skiing. Full day and half-day heli-skiing packages are also offered. Although access is difficult and on-hill facilities are limited at present, Azu has the potential to become a destination ski resort. A helicopter skiing operation is being organized this year, based in Fort St. John. It will use the Northern Rocky Mountains.

The Region's landscape and long winter season are ideally suited for many cold-weather sports, as long as proper clothing is worn. Ice fishing, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling are a few of the activities which could be promoted for tourists.

### 2.3.3 Accommodation

Data on accommodation is mainly derived from two sources: the annual accommodation directories prepared by the Province through the Ministry of Tourism and from statistics kept by the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division. The accommodation directory, while invaluable, only records "tourist quality" facilities and moderately underestimates supply since not all tourist facilities are recorded in the directories.

#### 2.3.3.1 Supply of Tourist Accommodation

Tables 4 and 5 show the amount of tourist accommodation available by type and area within the Region for 1979.14) A similar analysis for 1971 indicates that the number of tourist accommodation establishments has decreased by five per cent between 1971 and 1979.15) Roofed accommodation decreased by three per cent while campgrounds increased by 41% during the same period. The greatest percentage decreases occurred in the Muskwa-Rocky Mountains (-40%) and Takla/Nation Plateau planning units (-43%).

## TABLE 4

## TOURISM ACCOMMODATION BY TYPE:
## PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY TOURISM REGION 1971-1979

| | ESTABLISHMENTS | | | UNITS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type | Number (1979) | % | % Change 1971-1979 | Number | % | % Change 1971-1979 | Average Units Per Establishment |
| Hotel | 14 | 17.9 | - 6.7 | 784 | 31.3 | 2.0 | 56 |
| Motel | 33 | 42.3 | - 13.2 | 666 | 26.6 | 2.8 | 20 |
| Cottage | 2 | 2.6 | 100.0 | 6 | 0.2 | - | 3 |
| Resort | 3 | 3.8 | 0.0 | 17 | 0.7 | - 29.2 | 6 |
| Lodge | 5 | 6.4 | 25.0 | 46 | 1.8 | - 51.6 | 9 |
| H/F Camp | 1 | 1.3 | 100.0 | 5 | 0.2 | - | 5 |
| Sub-Total | 58 | 74.4 | - 3.3 | 1,524 | 60.9 | - 0.8 | 26 |
| Commercial Campground | 20 | 25.6 | 66.7 | 569 | 22.7 | 66.4 | 28 |
| Public Campground | 11 | 14.1 | 10.0 | 411 | 16.4 | 36.5 | 37 |
| Sub-Total | 31 | 39.7 | 41.0 | 980 | 39.1 | 52.4 | 32 |
| Miscellaneous* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| TOTAL | 78 | - | - 4.9 | 2,504 | 100.0 | 9.7 | 32 |

* Miscellaneous includes other forms of accommodation plus unclassified facilities.

Note: The establishment column does not add up to the total as some establishments offer more than one type of accommodation and are thus double counted.

Source: Tourist Accommodation, British Columbia, Ministry of Tourism, 1979.

## TABLE 5

## ACCOMMODATION BY AREA: PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY TOURISM REGION, 1979

| | ESTABLISHMENTS | | | UNITS | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Hotel, Motel Resort, Lodge | | Cottages F&H/Camps | | Campsites | | Total | | |
| | No. | % | % Change 1971-1979 | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | % Change 1971-1979 |
| Liard Plain | 3 | 3.8 | 200 | 49 | 3.2 | 5 | 45.5 | 10 | 1.0 | 64 | 2.6 | 156.0 |
| Cassiar Mountains | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Tatlatui Plateau | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Omineca Mountains | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Takla/Nation Plateau | 4 | 5.1 | -42.9 | 18 | 1.2 | - | - | 202 | 20.6 | 220 | 8.8 | 18.0 |
| Kechika/Finlay Trench | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Williston/Parsnip Valley | 4 | 5.1 | 33.3 | 186 | 12.3 | - | - | - | - | 186 | 7.4 | 28.0 |
| Liard/Rabbit Plateau | 2 | 2.6 | - | 9 | 0.6 | - | - | 21 | 2.1 | 30 | 1.2 | -16.7 |
| Muskwa/Rocky Mtns. | 6 | 7.7 | -40.0 | 54 | 3.7 | - | - | 65 | 6.6 | 119 | 4.8 | -46.4 |
| Hart/Misinchinka Ranges | 3 | 3.8 | 50.0 | 17 | 1.1 | - | - | 20 | 2.0 | 37 | 1.5 | 76.2 |
| Peace Reach | 3 | 3.8 | 50.0 | 77 | 5.1 | - | - | - | - | 77 | 3.1 | 156.7 |
| Sikanni/Muskwa Foothills | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Wapiti/Pine Foothills | 1 | 1.3 | 100.0 | - | - | - | - | 20 | 2.0 | 20 | 0.8 | 100.0 |
| Peace River Plateau | 40 | 51.3 | -13.0 | 919 | 60.7 | - | - | 486 | 49.6 | 1,405 | 56.1 | 4.9 |
| Beatton/Sikanni Plateau | 6 | 7.7 | 200.0 | 25 | 1.7 | 6 | 54.5 | 88 | 9.0 | 119 | 4.8 | 260.6 |
| Fort Nelson Lowland | 6 | 7.7 | -14.3 | 159 | 10.5 | - | - | 68 | 6.9 | 227 | 9.1 | -7.3 |
| TOTAL | 78 | 100% | - 4.9 | 1,513 | 100% | 11 | 100% | 980 | 100% | 2,504 | 100% | 9.7 |

Note: Miscellaneous as in Table 4

Source: Tourist Accommodation, British Columbia, Ministry of Tourism, 1979.

The total number of tourist accommodation units increased by almost 10% between 1971 and 1979.[16)] Roofed accommodation units decreased by almost one per cent while campsites increased by 52% during the same period. The largest percentage increases occurred in the Liard Plain (156%), Peace Reach (157%) and Beatton/Silkanni Plateau (261%) and Alberta Plateau (110%) areas, while the greatest actual increase in number of units occurred in the Beatton Sikanni Plateau unit (from 33 to 119 units). The average number of units per establishment offering roofed accommodation has remained constant at 26 units. Average campground size has gone from 30 to 32 sites during the same period.

B.C. Research data on year of purchase indicates that there had been at least a 10% turnover of ownership of accommodation facilities in this region between 1972 and 1978.[17)] The data indicates that 39% of establishments were built between 1970 and 1978, and 24% of facilities are over 20 years old, but an analysis of building permits granted for construction or expansion of accommodation establishments indicates that 31% of units were built between 1971 and 1979. The majority of this new supply was constructed, between 1971 and 1979, in the Peace River Plateau unit.

### 2.3.3.2 Occupancy

Annual hotel and motel occupancy in the Region was approximately 78% for 1979, a three per cent increase over the previous two years. This occupancy rate is eight per cent higher than the provincial average, primarily as a result of recent gas and oil developments. The number of available room nights increased by 20% during the same period. There figures are based on a survey of the Peace River Plateau area. No information seems to be available to permit a breakdown of occupancy rates for other areas.[18)]

The average provincial park campground occupancy rate increased by six per cent, from 56% in 1976 to 62% in 1978. The number of available site nights increased by 11% during the same period. The public campgrounds in the Liard/Rabbit Plateau landscape/planning unit have a high average rate of occupancy of 117%, although there has been a 17% decrease since 1976. The number of available site nights in this unit increased by 50% during the same period. The public campgrounds in the Alberta Plateau unit have a low average rate of annual occupancy of 54%, an eight per cent decrease since 1976. They have experienced a 35% increase in available site nights since 1977.19)

There does not seem to be any readily available information as to occupancy rates for commercial campgrounds.

### 2.3.3.3 Seasonality

Approximately 31% of occupied room nights occur during the summer. The fall accounts for 25% while the spring and winter seasons account for 22% each. These figures apply to the Peace River Plateau area.

There is no information available as to seasonal occupancy for other areas in the Region.20) Most provincial campgrounds in the Region are open from April or May until September with occupancy peaking noticeably during July and August.21)

### 2.3.3.4 Source of Business

Based on the 1979 survey for the Peace River Plateau unit, tourists provide approximately 24% of occupied room nights in the Region's hotels and motels. Commercial travellers account for 28% of occupied room nights while long-term rental and crew occupancy consists of the remaining 48%. No surveys have been done elsewhere in the Region to determine if this pattern is consistent.

Public Campgrounds are utilized exclusively by tourists. Private campgrounds, however, often accommodate work crews and long-term tenants.

### 2.3.4 Transportation Modes and Corridors

#### 2.3.4.1 Introduction

Accessibility to a tourism attraction or facility is of major concern to both the tourist and the tourism facility operator. A person must be able to readily get to both the area in which the tourism facility is located and to the facility itself for it to be attractive to most tourists.

The following briefly describes the major and some of the minor transportation facilities in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region.

#### 2.3.4.2 Roads and Highways

As is characteristic of most northern areas of the country, there are few major roads in the Peace River/Alaska Highway Tourism Region with vast areas accessible only by bush plane or helicopter. The longest and most famous route in the region is the Alaska Highway. This and other routes are described below.

Highway 97

Highway 97 provides the only major road connection between this Region and other parts of the province. It stretches from the southern portion of the Region near Prince George to Dawson Creek near the British Columbia/Alberta border and north to the British Columbia/Yukon Territory border. The section of this route which runs north from Dawson Creek forms a portion of the Alaska Highway. It is joined at the southern end by Highways 34 and 49 from Alaska.

Automobile travel to and from the Region to the south and north is relatively light with an average daily summer traffic flow of less than 1,500 vehicles per day[22] on each leg of the route. The average daily summer traffic flow to the east is slightly higher.[23] As might be expected, the traffic on portions of the route between Chetwynd, Dawson Creek and Fort St. John is heavier indicating that there is considerable intra-regional travel between these centres.

The province of British Columbia is continually working to upgrade and maintain their portion of this road.

### Highway 29

This route provides an alternate route to Highway 97 between Chetwynd and Fort St. John through Hudson's Hope.

### Other Roads

The highway network in the Region is supplemented by a number of secondary roads which are primarily used for resource exploration and extractive activities. Generally these routes do not provide for a circular travel route but rather are dead end routes leading to particular locations. Many of these routes are not always passable in a car or tour bus. They provide opportunities for backcountry recreation that is becoming more popular with regional and nearby Alberta markets.

### 2.3.4.3 Scheduled Buses

The major scheduled bus service in the Region is offered by Greyhound Lines. A summary of the routes in the Region is given below. Most buses stop at all way points along the route.

Prince George to Dawson Creek - via Highway 97
Daily Service

Edmonton (Alberta) to Dawson Creek - via Grande Prairie (Alberta)
Daily Service

Dawson Creek to Alaska - via the Alaska Highway (Highway 97)
Daily Service

### 2.3.4.4 Rail Service

There is currently no regular passenger rail service in the Peace River/Alaska Highway Tourism Region.

### 2.3.4.5 Air Service

Major air service to the Peace River/Alaska Highway Tourism Region is provided at Dawson Creek and Fort St. John by Canadian Pacific and Pacific Western Airlines. International flights and flights from eastern Canada land at Vancouver, Edmonton or Calgary prior to flying on to Fort St. John or Dawson Creek. Fort St. John is also connected to Fort Nelson and then to Whitehorse.

Smaller airports, some of which are suitable for recreational aircraft, exist at various other locations in and around the Region. Details of ground facilities at the various locations are available from the British Columbia Aviation Council.

### 2.3.5 Tourist Service Centres

The travelling public has need of various tourist services which, depending upon the origin and preferences of the traveller, can include: airports, customs clearance, public transportation, vehicle rentals, accommodation, licensed restaurants, grocery stores, fast food outlets, gas stations, automotive repairs, tourist information and health care facilities. Since the complete assortment of these services can only be found in the very largest provincial centres, and detailed data are very limited, an assessment of the general availability of only five categories of services has been developed for the communities within the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. These services, i.e., accommodation, tourist information centres, food services, automotive services and hospitals, are presented by landscape unit and urban community in Table 6.

Accommodation includes both roofed (hotel/motel) facilities and campgrounds/trailer parks; the emphasis in this category is on availability and choice - hence, number of establishments. Elsewhere in this study (Section 2.3.3) accommodation is discussed in greater detail. Most of the data is derived from the Provincial Tourist Accommodation Guide, although it is recognized that not all accommodation is listed as some is not thought suitable for tourists. With regards to good services, there is no comprehensive guide which lists all restaurants by type (i.e. licensed, family, fast food) and other food outlets such as grocery stores. The Peace River-Liard regional economic profile did not contain this type of data either. No original in-field research has been undertaken because of the time and cost limitations. Tourist information refers to staffed tourist booths, most of which operate only during the peak tourist season, while automotive services generally refer to service stations offering full or some basic level of repairs. The availability of emergency health care and its distribution within the Region is the concern behind the hospital location data.

# TABLE 6

TOURISM SERVICE CENTRES: PEACE RIVER/ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

| Landscape Unit | Urban Centre | Population 1976 Census[1] | Tourist Service Availability | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Accommodation[2] | Tourist Information[3] | Food Service[4] | Automotive Service[5] | Hospital[6] |
| Liard Plain | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Cassiar Mountains | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Tatlatui Plateau | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Omineca Mountains | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Takla / Nation Plateau | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Kechika / Finlay Trench | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Williston / Parsnip Valley | Mackenzie | 5,338 | 2H, 1M, 1C | Yes | Yes, minimal | Yes | Yes |
| Liard / Rabbit Plateau | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Muskwa / Rocky Mountains | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Hart / Misinchinka Ranges | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Peace Reach | Hudson's Hope | 2,383 (1979 est) | 2M | Yes | Yes, minimal | Fuel only | No |
| Sikanni / Muskwa Foothills | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Wapiti / Pine Foothills | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |

# TABLE 6 CONTINUED

TOURISM SERVICE CENTRES: PEACE RIVER/ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION (CONT)

| Landscape Unit | Urban Centre | Population 1976 Census 1) | Tourist Service Availability | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Accommodation 2) | Tourist Information 3) | Food Service 4) | Automotive Service 5) | Hospital 6) |
| Peace River Plateau | Chetwynd | 2,400<br>(1979 est) | 4M, 3H, 1C | Yes, Chamber of Commerce | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | Dawson Creek | 13,260<br>(1979 est) | 8M, 3H, 2C | Yes, Tourism B.C. | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | Fort St. John | 15,286<br>(1979 est) | 7M, 4H | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Alberta Plateau | - | - | - | --- | - | - | - |
| Fort Nelson Lowland | Fort Nelson | 4,601<br>(1979 est) | 2M, 3H, 1C, 1M&C | Yes, Chamber of Commerce - Summers | Yes | Yes | Yes |

SOURCES:

1) 1976 Census, Statistics Canada; and Peace River-Liard Economic Development Commission, February 1980.
2) Accommodation and Campground Directory, British Columbia 1980, Ministry of Tourism.
3) Peace River-Alaska Tourist Association, August 1980.
4) Figures by type of establishment and urban centre are not published. But the Ministry of Health 1979 figures for approved food establishments include:

| HEALTH UNIT | NO. |
|---|---|
| Peace River | 155 |

Supplied by the Restaurant and Food Association of B.C., May 1980.

5) Emergency Road Service Directory, British Columbia Automobile Association, January 15,1980; and Approved Auto Repair Services, British Columbia Automobile Association, 1980.
6) British Columbia Health Association, January 15, 1980 - Member List (only acute care facilities with emergency service were considered.).

In the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region, Dawson Creek and Fort St. John are the dominant tourist service centres, offering a wide range of accommodation and food services, tourist information, health care, automobile services and regional airports. The second most important tourist service centres are Fort Nelson and Chetwynd, followed by MacKenzie and Hudson's Hope. Communities such as Hudson's Hope have only marginal facilities, especially food services. Clearly, certain landscape units within the Region are quite deficient in meeting basic tourist service needs, with twelve units devoid of population concentrations and hence tourist services. The Peace River Plateau unit has the strongest service capability; the Fort Nelson Lowland unit and the Peace Reach and Williston/ Parsnip Valley units can also meet most service needs. Some minimal services such as gas stations, grocery stores, coffee shops, and small motels/campgrounds can be found at intervals of anywhere from 20 to 200 km along the Hart and Alaska Highways.

## 2.4 Human Resources

### 2.4.1 Introduction

The following paragraphs describe the demographic and socio-economic character of the Region. Trends in population and income growth as well as in the make-up of the labour force are considered in terms of their implications for the tourist industry. The socio-economic character of the Region is also reflected in the events and attractions which are offered. These are described in the third part of this seciton.

### 2.4.2 Regional Demography

Table 7 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region, which is slightly larger than the Peace River-Liard Regional District. Population growth was very slow from 1971 to 1976, but recently has grown much more rapidly due mainly to activity in the oil and natural gas industries. The Peace River-Liard Economic Development Commission estimates the 1979 population of the Regional District at 58,218, a 32% increase over 1976. Including MacKenzie, the Region's population is closer to 65,000 persons.

The Fort St. John area has experienced the fastest growth and the city now has an estimated population of over 15,000 making it the largest community in the Region. Other major population centres are Dawson Creek (1979 population estimate: 13,300), District of MacKenzie (estimate 6,000), the Villages of Chetwynd (estimate 2,500) and Fort Nelson (estimate 5,000) and the District of Hudson's Hope (estimate 3,000). The remaining 35% of the population live in small communities and rural areas.

Although the Region experienced a decline in the under 15 age group from 1971 to 1976, it still has a very youthful population. The Region has a very low proportion of people in the retirement age group. The level of education in the region experienced relatively slow growth and in 1976 was well below the provincial average. Average income also grew more slowly than in British Columbia as a whole and in 1976 was somewhat below the provincial average. This situation has probably improved considerably since 1976 with the industrial expansion in the Region.

## TABLE 7

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS:

## PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY TOURIST REGION, 1971-1976

| | Value | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Characteristics | 1971 (A) | 1976 (B) | Percentage[1] Change Over 1971 (C) | Index[2] (D) |
| Population (000)[3] | 44.0 | 44.8 | 1.8 | 14 |
| Age Distribution Percentage[3] | | | | |
| Under 15 years | 37.4% | 33.1% | (10.1) | 137 |
| 15 - 64 years | 58.5% | 62.4% | 8.2 | 94 |
| 65 years and over | 4.1% | 4.5% | 10.7 | 46 |
| Average Family Size[3] | 4.3 | 3.8% | - | 115 |
| Percentage of population 15 and over having Grade 11 or more education[3] | 41.6% | 52.1% | 36.6 | 82 |
| Average Real Income[4] (1971 dollars) | $5,947 | $7,107 | 19.5 | 94 |

Notes:

1) Percentage change refers to changes in the numerical values of all components rather than changes in percentage distribution.

2) Index (D) compares 1976 regional values in Column (B) to the provincial average except for the population index which compares population growth (Column C) with that of the province. (BC = 100).

3) Central Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Economic Development Census Data by Tourism Region, Special Printout; unpublished; (Victoria, 1979). Represents Peace River-Liard Regional District.

4) Revenue Canada, Taxation Statistics (Ottawa, 1973 ed and 1978 ed). Average income per tax return expressed in 1971 dollars using Consumer Price Index, 1971 = 100.

### 2.4.3 Economic Activity

Table 8 summarizes the employment situation in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. The Region has a very strong and diversified resource base. Though no longer a major employer, agriculture provided the original impetus for development in the Peace River Valley. The Valley is still an important grain producing area while cattle ranching occurs in the uplands. Agriculture supports a number of small food and feed processing plants in Dawson Creek and to a lesser extent in Fort St. John. The economy of MacKenzie is based on pulp, sawmilling and logging.

Forestry is important throughout the Region and supports a number of sawmills in various centres and a veneer plant in Fort Nelson. There is some potential for expansion of the forest industries in the Fort St. John and Fort Nelson areas.

Recently spiralling energy prices have spurred the exploration and development of the Region's vast oil, gas, and coal reserves with the result that the exploration, production, transportation, and refining of these products have come to dominate the Region's economy. The Fort St. John area is the main source of natural gas and the only source of oil in the province. In 1975, it had 285 gas wells and 460 oil wells in operation. An additional five gas wells were located in the Dawson Creek area and 56 around Fort Nelson. As of December 1980, there were over 600 producing oil and 600 producing gas wells in the Region. Taylor is the main manufacturing centre for oil and gas with a crude oil refinery and a sulphur plant. There is also a sulphur plant at Fort Nelson and a larger one at Chetwynd. There were five gas processing plants in the Region as of December 1978 and the Regional District reports indicated five more plants were in the planning stages.

## TABLE 8

## EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, 1979

| | Peace River-Liard Regional District |
|---|---|
| Level of Unemployment | B |
| Major Sources of Economic Activity | |
| Forestry | m |
| Mines, Quarries, & Oilwells | M* |
| Forest Products Manufacturing | m |
| Other Manufacturing | M |
| Construction | M |
| Transportation, Communication, & Utilities | m |
| Trade | m |
| Health Education & Welfare | m |
| Tourism & Other Services | m |

Notes:

B = Below Average

m = Minor source of employment (5% - 10% of unemployment)

M = Major source of employment (over 10% of unemployment)

* = Planned or anticipated major new development

Source: Current Estimates provided by Employment and Immigration Canada Manpower Centre, Dawson Creek and Peace River-Liard Regional District, Economic Development Commission.

Pipeline construction has been an important adjunct of oil and gas development in the area. The proposed Alaska Highway gas and oil pipelines, if built, will cause a great, though temporary construction boom in the area.

There are two major coal areas in the region, one near Williston Lake and one southwest of Chetwynd. Mining of these deposits commenced in early 1980s.

The W.A.C. Bennett Dam on the Peace River created Williston Lake, an enormous reservoir. The dam itself is a minor tourist attraction and there is potential for increased exploitation of the dam as well as the Williston Lake as tourist attractions and vacation areas for the regional market. A second major hydro installation, the Site One Dam, is now completing construction below the Bennett Dam and there is potential for further hydro generating capacity on the Peace as well as the Liard River.

The main population centres of the Region lie along the Alaska Highway. Dawson Creek lies at the intersection of the Alaska Highway and Highway 2, a major link with Edmonton through Grande Prairie. The B.C. railroad connects Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, and Fort Nelson with Prince George. Dawson Creek is a major commercial centre of the Region. MacKenzie is on the southern tip of Williston Reservoir and is oriented towards Prince George.

Tourism has been generally limited to through traffic along the Alaska Highway and business travellers to the Region. The Region has excellent hunting and fishing resources as well as potential for ski development but so far is not widely recognized as a tourist destination area. The rapidly growing, youthful population of the area should provide a strong base market for recreation facilities and attractions. These in turn will attract outside markets as awareness of the Region grows and access is improved.

### 2.4.4 Events and Attractions

The existing events and attractions in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region are representative of the current level of tourism development and are summarized below. Generally, the Region's strength is in natural resources, as there are few man-made attractions. The Region is known for big game hunting, the Alaska Highway, spectacular scenery, resource development and its Gold Rush and pioneering heritage.

From a natural attractions perspective, the major features of this Region are the opportunities for big game hunting, the vast tracts of wilderness, and the diversity of the Region's landscapes.

The area is internationally famous for its big game hunting with licensed guides, based on the presence of many species of large mammals inhabiting immense untouched areas of land. Photo safaris and trail riding, which offer non-consumptive hunting are now also being developed. The northern Rocky Mountains offer breathtaking scenery the entire length of the Region with numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation (e.g., backpacking, fishing, canoeing). Portions of the Region encompass large wilderness parks, such as Tatlatui, Kwadacha, Stone Mountain and Muncho Lake, which are currently only modest attractions mostly because of limited access or development.

Lying in the Rocky Mountain Trench, Williston Lake/Reservoir is British Columbia's largest body of freshwater. Its recreational potential is just beginning to be tapped for boating and fishing. To the east, in contrast with the mountains, lies the mighty Peace River and its broad scenic valley.

There are several hot springs in the Region of which the Liard River Hot Springs is the most developed with the emphasis being on the natural rather than commercial aspects of the Springs.

Prehistoric fossils have been discovered in the Peace River Valley, while rockhounding may be pursued in several landscape units.

Man-made attractions, distributed mostly along the highway corridors, include the Alaska Highway itself, major resource developments and aspects of local heritage. As the primary feature the Alaska Highway draws thousands of adventurers each summer who drive the rugged road between Dawson Creek, B.C. and Fairbanks, Alaska. The next strongest attractions are those related to resource development, especially the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, the Shrum Generating Station, and the recently completed Peace Canyon Dam. The Bennett Dam and Shrum Generating Station are the most popular for which figures are available, drawing 32,000 to 34,000 registered tour visitors annually. Other "industrial" attractions, most of which offer tours, are natural gas and oil refineries, lumber, pulp and paper mills, grain elevators, and an apiary.

Heritage preservation and presentation are also important; there are artifacts dating back to the first explorers, the pioneer settlers, the gold rush of 1898, native Indian culture, prehistoric fossils; these plus local flora and fauna are displayed in the Hudson's Hope and Dawson Creek Museums, the South Peace Pioneer Village, and Peace Island Park Museum. Hudson's Hope, British Columbia's third oldest community, also features a number of heritage buildings. Other attractions are the local art galleries, golf courses (two) and the boat tours on Peace River and Williston Lake/Reservoir.

Some new and enlarged attractions are now under discussion and/or development around the Region. They include: further development of Azu Ski Village, recreational development of the Williston and Site One reservoirs, a tourist viewpoint and restaurant at Bennett Dam; heli-skiing from Fort Nelson, and a new museum and tourism development at Hudson's Hope.

As a result of the Province's Funfest program for 1980, events have received more prominence than usual resulting in increased scheduled events. The events which were available in 1980 in this Region can be categorized as follows: a range of festivals (winter, spring, summer); fall and country fairs; rodeos; loggers sports; and specialty participative sports (golf, chess, raft and canoe races). The Big Dam Canoe Race on the Peace River and the World's Class A Invitational Gold Panning Championships in Taylor are two of the more unusual summer events while the Annual Tapper's Rendezvous is an extraordinary winter carnival featuring dog sled races, flour packing, and tea races. Generally, for their type and size, many events in the area are well attended.

Within the Region the Peace River Plateau unit has the strongest combination of events and attractions.

## 2.5 Historic Resources

The Region has an interesting history related to the Fur Trade/ Exploration and Pioneer Settlement themes. Because of the remoteness and poor accessibility, the Region was somewhat removed from the mainstream of the province's development following the decline of the fur trade until after the turn of the last century. Since then, the Region has been in the forefront of the new pioneering movement that has led to the settlement and development of the north.

The first occupants of the Region where Athabaskan Indian groups, the Beaver inhabiting the Peace River Plateau, the Slave tribes in the Fort Nelson Lowland and the Sekani occupying a vast area to the west of the Foothills. The tribes were nomadic hunters and gatherers utilizing animals such as deer, bear, beaver, wildfowl and fish and a variety of vegetable foods such as berries, roots and nuts. Since their lives were dominated by the search for food their material culture was much less elaborate than that of the coastal tribes. Consequently, only implements and artifacts that would be of interest to tourists remain from this period and are available in local museums. There are probably a number of archaeologically significant sites scattered throughout the Region, however, little excavation and research has been done because of the vastness of the land area to be covered.

The Fur Trade/Exploration era was of considerable importance in the Region. The oldest site of European habitation in mainland B.C. was the Rocky Mountain Fort founded by the Northwest Company in the early 1790s at the confluence of the Peace and Moberley Rivers, near present day Hudson's Hope.

The Peace River was the only waterway to breach the wall of the Rocky Mountains. Thus it formed a major route for transporting furs from the rich territory of New Caledonia. Alexander MacKenzie and his expedition started out from near Fort St. John in 1793 on his epic journey to the Pacific. Simon Fraser established a series of fur trade posts throughout the territory in 1805; Fort McLeod, Rocky Mountain Portage House (on the Peace River Canyon, and therefore the site will likely be lost to further Hydro reservoir flooding), Fort Nelson, Fort St. John. Fraser started from the Peace River on his journey to the Fraser River in 1808.

Many of the artifacts from this era are displayed in local museums or are protected in historic sites. However, virtually no major excavation or protection work has been done. Fort McLeod, near MacKenzie, has been designated as a provincial historic park but no reconstruction is planned for the foreseeable future as Parks Canada is developing Fort St. James National Historic Park, 115 km to the southeast in the Yellowhead 16 Tourism Region; this national site would be a direct competitor to Fort McLeod.

The Region remained the domain of fur traders, trappers and hunters well into the 20th century as settlement and resource development did not start in earnest until after World War I. The Hudson's Bay store in Fort Nelson is one of the few in western Canada where raw furs are still commonly traded and many of the native people still derive a significant portion of their income from trapping.

The southern part of the Region enjoyed a brief gold rush in the early 1870s when discoveries were made in the Omineca River/ Germansen Lake area. The towns of Germansen, Manson Lake, Dunkeld and Howellton were active for about five years and were abandoned as the gold was exhausted. The ruins of log buildings are all that remain.

With the general gold fever that existed in the 1860s, the slightest news would touch off a rush. This was the case in 1861, when a minor rush was started to the Peace River area. Significant quantities of gold were never found.

The Pioneer Settlement and Resource Development eras did not start in the Region until after 1900. The Peace River district was the last farming frontier in British Columbia with the first farm established in 1907. Homesteading occurred rapidly just prior to World War I. Attention had been drawn to the agricultural capability much earlier, but the lack of cheap, reliable transportation hindered settlement. Dawson Creek, established after World War I as a farming service centre, was named after an outstanding geologist and scientist. His geodetic surveys of 1879 reported the fertility of the prairie which eventually aided in its settlement and later prompted exploration for its oil and gas.

The early farmers had several interesting and innovative means of overcoming the transportation problems. Most imported and exported goods were carried through Edson, Alberta, on large freight sleighs in March when the snow was deep enough. Horse drawn barges were also used along the Peace River. The ubiquitous riverboat was also used with the D.A. Thomas and the Peace River plying the river between the head of navigation at Hudson's Hope and Peace River Town in Alberta from 1905 to 1922. After World War I, with gradual improvements to roads, the riverboats and the completion of a railway from Alberta in 1930, agriculture production was stimulated and the Peace River district became a major grain producer for the province. Much of the agriculture theme is presented in the Hudson's Hope Pioneer Museum and the South Peace Pioneer Village at Dawson Creek.

The Resource Development theme for this northern Region is quite different from the southern regions as it did not get underway until the 20th century. Thus a more appropriate historic theme would be called Northern Development, as the Region was part of the national effort after the First World War, to bring the north of the country into the modern era. Elements of this theme include the Bush Pilots who were instrumental to northern access, tying many remote communities together. The first flights in the Region were made in 1919 with the 1930s as the heyday of legendary exploits. The R.N.W.M.P./R.C.M.P had a prominent role in the Region as well with many officers performing remarkable feats of courage and endurance. The first efforts at mining the rich Peace Coal Block began in 1912 with the Gething Mine operating sporadically for many decades because of the lack of cheap and dependable transportation, a problem that remains to this day. Production peaked during World War II, when the coal was trucked to markets via the Alaska Highway.

The Alaska Highway was a massive wartime effort that pushed an all-weather road 1,523 miles (2,538 km) from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks, Alaska, in a nine month period in 1942. This road was the major impetus to development and its construction is of great significance to the Region. The men and machinery should be interpreted in an "ALCAN" Highway Museum showing route selection, construction methods, the machinery and photographs.

This Region was also on the forefront of the new energy frontier with oil and gas exploration starting in 1948, the first oil well in British Columbia struck in 1951 and the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, the largest hydro generating project in the province, completed in 1968.

In summary, the Region does have an interesting and significant history that could be interpreted to visitors to expand the scope of their experience. Of particular importance are: the Fur Trade/ Exploration theme, especially Alexander MacKenzie and the various Hudson's Bay posts; the Pioneer (Northern) Agriculture theme and; the Northern Development theme notably the bush pilot and Alaska Highway construction elements.

An additional interesting facet of the Region's historical resources are the palaeontological discoveries of the Hudson's Hope area. They were known and studied as early as 1924 by the Royal Ontario Museum but the remoteness and cost of research curtailed major exploration. It was not until the realization that the most significant fossils and dinosaur tracks would be lost with the flooding of the Peace Reach of Williston Lake that major excavations were undertaken. From 1977 to 1979, a team from the Alberta Provincial Museum discovered 4,000 sets of dinosaur tracks and removed 80 of the most significant ones. The proximity of the finds to Hudson's Hope further emphasizes its potential role as a centre for historic interpretation when combined with its importance to the fur trade and agricultural development.

## 2.6 Summary and Assessment of Tourism Resources

As outlined in the methodology, the landscape/planning units were defined and mapped for the Region and an inventory of the natural resources was completed. In previous sections of this chapter, other pertinent tourism resources were examined such as recreational lands and facilities, accommodation, transportation, events and attractions, population characteristics and historical resources. Based on this research, the planning team analysed the resources of each landscape/planning unit and the existing travel corridors to determine those areas with the highest capability for tourism in the form of natural, physical, human and historical assets.

The analysis was conducted using an Evaluation Matrix in which various tourism elements of the four major resource divisions (natural, physical, human, historic) within each of the 16 landscape/planning units and adjacent to the travel corridor were assessed. The elements were then assigned a value ranging from 0 to 3 with 3 being the highest value received denoting an abundance and high quality of a particular asset. In this manner, within each corridor or landscape/planning unit, the comparative abundance or scarcity of the natural, physical, human and historical resources could be identified. For example, the Tatlatui Plateau unit has considerable natural resource assets but a low level of development of the human and physical resources. Comparisons can also be made between units and corridors for each of the four resource divisions so that the totals for specific types of resources can be compared to see which has greater potential for development of attractions based on a given resource.

For summary purposes, the landform units and corridors with the highest scores for each tourism resource type are listed in Table 9.

## TABLE 9

## SUMMARY EVALUATION OF HIGHEST RANKED LANDSCAPE/PLANNING UNITS AND TRAVEL CORRIDOR BY KEY TOURISM RESOURCES

| LANDFORM/PLANNING UNITS with | TRAVEL CORRIDOR with |
|---|---|
| Best Natural Resources<br>1. Takla/Nation Plateau<br>2. Peace River Plateau<br>3. Williston/Parsnip Valley | Best Natural Resources<br>1. Alaska Highway |
| Best Physical Resources<br>1. Peace River Plateau<br>2. Williston/Parsnip Valley<br>3. Wapiti Pine Foothills | Best Physical Resources<br>1. Alaska Highway |
| Best Human Resources<br>1. Peace River Plateau<br>2. Peace Reach<br>3. Fort Nelson Lowland | Best Human Resources<br>1. Alaska Highway |
| Best Historical Resources<br>1. Peace Reach<br>2. Peace River Plateau<br>3. Williston/Parsnip Valley | Best Historical Resources<br>1. Alaska Highway |

The landscape/planning units, with their combinations of topographic, biotic and hydrologic characteristics provide an interesting scenic setting ranging from incised plateau surfaces to rugged mountain terrain with a broad range of extensive tourism/recreation opportunities. However, the inaccessibility of most of the Region has greatly inhibited the development and use of the considerable capabilities for backcountry hiking, mountaineering, trail riding and canoeing that do exist. Most development and use of the Region's resources is concentrated in the road accessible areas and is generally focussed on the water-based capabilities which accounts for the high ranking of the Takla/Nation Plateau, Peace River Plateau and Williston/Parsnip Valley units. There are other units with more spectacular landforms and greater land-based capabilities (e.g., Cassiar Mountains, Muskwa/Rocky Mountains), however, their general inaccessibility, short warm weather season and more limited water-based recreational capabilities reduced their scoring.

A major limitation throughout the study area is the climatic characteristics. Generally the summer season is warm and pleasant but brief, amounting to about six weeks in the south of the Region and further reduced with movement northward or with altitude. Autumn is by far the best shoulder season and efforts should be made to extend visitation into the fall. Winters are quite cold and even bitter in many places although the snow cover is reliable and long-lived. Enjoyable winter activities can be carried on but appropriate clothing is a necessity. Thus no landscape unit ranked very highly for climatic categories.

Lake-based recreation capability is highest in the Takla/Nation Plateau and Peace River Plateau units with the considerable potential of the Williston Reservoir yet to be more than minimally utilized. The rivers of the Interior Plains all have good capability for canoeing and the Liard River has potential for rafting trips. The water-based recreation opportunities within the Region are considerable even though they are constrained by the shortness of the warm-weather season.

With regard to developed physical resources, Peace River Plateau, the landscape/planning unit with the longest period of settlement, ranks the highest. The unit has the largest supply of accommodation, hotels capable of holding conventions, the Region's largest urban centres, two regional airports, golf courses and some guest ranching. Somewhat down the scale, but ranking second and third were the Williston/Parsnip Valley and Wapiti/Pine Foothills landscape/planning units. Both of these units have excellent scenic viewing opportunities. The Williston/Parsnip unit has some existing boating facilities and a golf course while the Wapiti/Pine Foothills unit has Provincial Recreation Area. Several other units ranked very closely to these two while others had quite poor physical resource bases.

Again, the Peace River/Plateau landscape/planning unit ranks highest in human resources with its community college, rapidly growing population, high income, variety of existing and developing museums, good variety of events, especially rodeos, fairs and logger sports, a strong economic base and a variety of lifestyles. The Peace Reach unit ranked second with the massive Peace River hydro projects, pastoral and independent lifestyles and a strong desire for increased tourism development. Not far behind was the Fort Nelson Lowland unit with its growing population and wealth, developing museum, and unique special events such as the Trapper's Rendezvous. The Williston/Parsnip Valley unit also ranked well, with all remaining units a substantial distance behind the four leaders.

The two landscape/planning units with the best historical resources have representative elements from the three major heritage themes of the Region. The Fur Trade/Exploration, the Pioneer Settlement and Northern Resource Development periods have considerable potential to be more fully developed to broaden the visitor's range of experiences in the Peace Reach and Peace River Plateau units.

By all major categories of the Evaluation Matrix, the Alaska Highway outranked the Hart Highway. Both routes are strong in quality natural resources; however, the physical and human resources have been considerably developed on the southern Alaska Highway because of the agricultural settlement and resource development activity. The heritage base is also better along the Alaska Highway. By landscape units, the Peace River Plateau appears to be the strongest on all accounts.

In summary, this northeastern quadrant of the province has a considerable array of extensive water and land-based resources capable of supporting a broad range of activities. Many of the activities would appeal to the adventure markets because of the remoteness of most of the landscape units. The development of the tourism potential of Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region will be dependant on matching the resource opportunities with the available markets within the constraints of the climatic regime and the limited patterns of access.

## FOOTNOTES:

1. Fish and Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Recreation and Conservation. Economic and Resource Management Aspects of Commercial Use of Fish and Wildlife Resources in British Columbia: Phase I and II Reports; prepared by Canadian Resourcescon Limited and Quadra Economic Consultants Limtied, Vancouver, 1978.

2. Ibid.

3. Fish and Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Recreation and Conservation. Fish and Wildlife in British Columbia: A Review of Resource Values; prepared by Quadra Economic Consultants Limtied, Vancouver, 1977.

4. Canadian Resourcecon Limited and Quadra Economic Consultants Limited. Op.Cit.

5. Quadra Economic Consultants Limited. Op.Cit.

6. Canadian Resourcecon Limited and Quadra Economic Consultants Limited. Op.Cit.

7. Ibid.

8. B.C. Parks Branch. Parks Data Handbook 1979 and 1980. (for all provincial parks statistics).

9. Fish and Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Recreation and Conservation. Economic and Resource Management Aspects of Commercial Use of Fish and Wildlife Resources in B.C.: Phase I and II Reports. Quadra Economic Consultants, Vancouver, 1978.

10. Quadra Economic Consultants Ltd. Op.Cit. The $1.6 million was calculated by taking 7.7% of the provincial total $20 million in expenditures made by non-resident fishermen in 1976-77.

11. Meeting in Fort St. John, August 1, 1980 with Andy Verigin, Recreation Coordinator, Bill Shepard, Director of Planning, both of the Peace River-Liard Regional District; Don Ashley, Tourism Coordinator for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourist Association; Ray Parfitt of the District of Hudson's Hope, and study consultants.

12. Wright, Richard and Rachell. Canoe Routes British Columbia; Surrey, Antonson Publishing Limited, 1977.

13. Governments of Canada and British Columbia. British Columbia River Rafting Study. TIDSA, 1979.

14. 1980 establishments are discussed under Tourist Service Centres.

15. A substantial amount of construction during 1979 and 1980 in the Fort St. John/Dawson Creek area will have increased both tourist quality establishments and units in the Peace River Plateau unit.

16. Ibid.

17. B.C. Inventory of Accommodation Facilities, 1979, B.C. Research.

18. Regional Supply/Demand Analysis, Pannell, Kerr, Forster & Ass. 1979.

19. 1978 Campground Attendance Profiles,B.C. Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division.

20. Pannell, Kerr, Forster & Associates, Op.Cit.

21. 1978 Campground Attendance Profiles, B.C. Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division.

22. Summer Traffic Volumes for Years 1974-1977 on Provincial Highways in British Columbia. Traffic Engineering Branch, Ministry of Highways and Public Works.

23. Ibid.

# 3.0 TOURISM MARKETS, VISITOR PROFILES AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

## 3.1 Introduction

The following chapter describes the current development of tourist activity in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. The utilization of tourism resources is considered in terms of the geographic origins of visitors to the Region, their socio-economic characteristics and the activities in which they participate. Short term trends in tourist activity are identified and the implications for future expansion are delineated.

## 3.2 Tourism Markets

### 3.2.1 Existing Markets

The Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region is not a traditional tourist destination area. Until recently, tourism was limited mainly to through traffic on the Alaska Highway, plus some big game hunting. With the current industrial boom in the Region, a great many business travellers visit the Region. These, plus the fast growing local population, are now stimulating demand for recreational facilities.

There is a strong existing regional market for freshwater boating and fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, and other outdoor activities which do not require extensive infrastructure. The Region's lakes and rivers attract some canoeists and fishermen from outside the Region, and guided river touring and hunting attract visitors from the United States and other parts of Canada. Camping draws a moderate number of tourists, many of whom are en route to the Yukon or Alaska. The Region's cultural events and attractions are not widely known outside the Region itself. The W.A.C. Bennett

Dam has received a good deal of publicity and attracts many visitors from the United States, British Columbia and other parts of Canada.

### 3.2.2 Perceived Tourism Markets

During the course of this study, briefs were solicited from tourism industry representatives, associations and other interested parties.

Forum participants reported that most of the Region's tourists appear to be Americans driving to Alaska, or Europeans who come primarily to hunt and fish. The main mode of transport is auto, and a few bus tours from British Columbia and Alberta visit the Region, mostly en route to Alaska. Bus travel is popular, but the Highway is not attractive to companies because of the high associated operating costs. It was felt that the best potential market would be highly urbanized countries such as Japan and those in Western Europe whose citizens would like a "pristine" environment. In support of this approach, it was suggested that special features be marketed to specific groups, for example alpine areas to mountaineering groups. In addition, there are some regional travel markets based primarily on population growth in Alberta, especially around Grande Prairie, and on growth in Prince George.

### 3.2.3 Market Opportunities

Phase I of this report identifies the type of resources which generate travel to or within British Columbia by market segment. During the course of this study, the resources of the Region were evaluated in terms of the markets they could attract. A comparison of these identified opportunities with the existing level of participation by each market in activities within the Region gives an indication of which resources could most profitably be developed and the markets which they would most likely attract. The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 10.

## 3.3 Market Forecast

Table 11 gives the forecast of person trips to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region for the period 1979 to 1983. Growth over the period is forecast at between 5.6% and 8.3% per year which is considerably above the forecast for the province as a whole. Fastest growth is expected in the B.C. resident market followed by the 'Other Canadian' market. By 1983, the breakdown of person trips by market is forecast as follows: B.C. residents, 67% to 69%; other Canadians 20%; United States residents 9% to 11%; other international visitors, one per cent.

## 3.4 Visitor Profiles

### 3.4.1 Introduction

The following profiles are based mainly on the surveys carried out by B.C. Research, namely the 1976 B.C. Residents Survey and the 1979 Visitors Survey. Because the sample sizes of visitors to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region were so small, observations based on this data should be taken as only roughly indicative of the type of tourists currently visiting the Region.

### 3.4.2 Traveller Characteristics

Table 12 shows the characteristics of travellers to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. The British Columbia and other Canadian markets include a relatively high number of persons in the under 18 and 18 to 24 year age groups. The male/female breakdown is somewhat surprising. Since the survey recorded the sex of the respondents only, rather than that of all members of the parties, this breakdown should not be given too strong an emphasis.

## TABLE 10

## SUMMARY OF SPECIALTY MARKET DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## PEACE RIVER - ALASKA HIGHWAY TOURISM REGION

| | MARKET SEGMENTS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SPECIALTY MARKET | International | U.S.A. | Interprovincial | Provincial | Regional |
| Freshwater Boating | | | X | X | |
| River Rafting | | X | X | X | X |
| White Water Canoeing | | | | X | X |
| Canoe Tripping | | | X | X | X |
| Fresh Water Fishing | | | | X | X |
| Swimming | | | | | X |
| Water Skiing | | | | | X |
| Alpine Skiing | | X | X | X | X |
| Heli Skiing | X | X | X | X | X |
| Cross Country Skiing | | | | | X |
| Big Game Hunting | X | | | | |
| Hunting Water Fowl | | | | X | X |
| Auto Touring | X | X | X | X | X |
| Wilderness Touring | X | X | X | X | X |
| Hiking/Backpacking | X | X | X | X | X |
| Mounting Climbing | | X | X | X | X |
| Trail Riding | X | | X | | X |
| Cottaging | | | | | X |
| Snowmobiling | | | | X | |
| Landscape Viewing | X | X | X | X | X |
| Wildlife Viewing | X | X | X | X | X |
| National Parks | X | X | X | X | X |
| Historic Parks | | | X | X | X |
| Museums | X | X | X | X | X |
| Cultural Attractions | | X | X | X | X |
| Hot Springs | | | X | X | X |
| Lodges | X | X | X | X | X |
| Convention/Recreation | | | | X | X |
| Oil & Gas Drilling | | | | X | X |
| Mining | | | X | X | X |

X = Market Opportunities

## TABLE 11

## MARKET FORECAST: PEACE RIVER - ALASKA HIGHWAY TOURISM REGION:

## PERSON TRIPS (000)

| MARKET | | FORECAST PERIOD | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 |
| B.C. Residents | H | 380 | 420 | 465 | 510 | 555 |
| | L | 315 | 340 | 365 | 390 | 415 |
| Other Canadians | H | 130 | 135 | 145 | 155 | 165 |
| | L | 105 | 110 | 115 | 120 | 125 |
| U.S. Residents | H | 70 | 70 | 75 | 75 | 75 |
| | L | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 |
| Other International | H | 5 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 10 |
| | L | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| TOTAL | H | 585 | 630 | 690 | 750 | 805 |
| | L | 495 | 525 | 555 | 585 | 615 |

TABLE 12

| TRAVELLER CHARACTERISTICS: PEACE RIVER - ALASKA HIGHWAY TOURISM REGION | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CHARACTERISTICS | | MARKET | | | | ALL VISITORS |
| | | B.C. RESIDENTS | OTHER CANADIANS | U.S. TOURISTS | OTHER INT'L. | |
| Age: | % Under 18 | 38 | 20 | 20 | 11 | 31 |
| | 18 - 24 | 19 | 14 | 11 | 10 | 17 |
| | 25 - 34 | 11 | 19 | 18 | 21 | 14 |
| | 35 - 54 | 15 | 30 | 24 | 34 | 20 |
| | Over 54 | 17 | 17 | 27 | 24 | 18 |
| Sex: | % Male | 36 | NA | NA | NA | 36 |
| | Female | 64 | NA | NA | NA | 64 |
| Education: | % Public School | 36 | NA | NA | NA | 36 |
| | High School | 48 | NA | NA | NA | 48 |
| | Technical/Vocational/Jr. College | - | NA | NA | NA | - |
| | University | 6 | NA | NA | NA | 6 |
| Family Income: | % Under $10,000 | 31 | 15 | 7 | - | 24 |
| | 10,000 - 20,000 | 51 | 22 | 40 | - | 43 |
| | Over 20,000 | 18 | 63 | 53 | 100 | 33 |
| | | | | | | |

Sources: B.C. Research; 1974 and 1979 Visitors Surveys and 1976 Residents Surveys.
Statistics Canada; Canadian Travel Surveys, 1977 2nd Quarter, 1978 3rd Quarter, 1978 4th Quarter.

The proportion of visitors with higher education is much lower than average among British Columbia resident tourists. Income levels are also considerably lower than average in the resident market segment. This could be explained by the high proportion of women and young people in the sample. Among out of province visitors, income levels are typical of visitors to British Columbia as a whole.

### 3.4.3 Trip Characteristics

Table 13 shows the characteristics of trips to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. As indicated by the traveller characteristics above, a very high proportion of British Columbia residents travel with children though in other market segments most parties are made up of several adults. Business travellers make up a relatively high proportion of visitors particularly among out-of-province Canadians, though pleasure is still the main reason for travel to the Region as elsewhere in the province.

Auto is the predominent form of transportation used by visitors. A very high proportion of United States visitors, many travelling to Alaska, use recreational vehicles though these are not as heavily used by other market segments. Resident visitors depend on air travel more than is usual in other parts of the province. More than half of resident visitors stayed with friends and relatives. The 1976 residents survey indicates that almost 30% of resident visitors camped outside of established campgrounds. With the growth in tourist accommodations since 1976, this situation has probably changed to one more closely resembling that of out-of-province visitors shown in the 1979 survey. This survey indicates a much stronger preference for commercial accommodation. About one-third of out-of-province Canadians stay at motels. On the other hand, as indicated by their preference for recreational vehicles, over 60% of United States visitors stayed at public and private campgrounds. Motels were preferred almost three to one over hotels by out-of-province visitors. A more current survey of residents would probably show a similar preference.

## TABLE 13

1

| TRIP CHARACTERISTICS: PEACE RIVER - ALASKA HIGHWAY TOURISM REGION | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CHARACTERISTICS | | MARKET | | | | ALL VISITORS |
| | | B.C. RESIDENTS | OTHER CANADIANS | U.S. TOURISTS | OTHER INT'L. | |
| Party Size: | Average Number of Persons | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Party Composition: | % Single Adult | 14 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 12 |
| | Several Adults | 29 | 69 | 69 | 69 | 43 |
| | Adults with Children | 57 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 45 |
| Trip Purpose: | % Business | 12 | 39 | 13 | - | 17 |
| | Personal | * | 2 | 8 | - | 2 |
| | Pleasure | 88 | 59 | 79 | 100 | 81 |
| Trip Duration: | Average Nights per Party | 8 | 14 | 38 | 54 | 14 |
| Nights in Region: | Average per Party | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Type of Transportation: | % Auto | 84 | 83 | 53 | 65 | 79 |
| | Recreational Vehicle | * | 16 | 45 | 10 | 10 |
| | Bus | 3 | * | * | - | 2 |
| | Air | 13 | 1 | * | 25 | 9 |
| | Rail | - | - | 1 | - | * |
| | Boat | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Other | - | * | - | - | * |

## TABLE 13 CONTINUED

2

Trip Characteristics (Cont'd.)

| CHARACTERISTICS | MARKET |  |  |  | ALL VISITORS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | B.C. RESIDENTS | OTHER CANADIANS | U.S. TOURISTS | OTHER INT'L. |  |
| Accommodation: % Hotel | 10 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| Motel | * | 33 | 18 | 16 | 10 |
| Friends and Relatives | 56 | 20 | 4 | 22 | 41 |
| Cottages/Cabins | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | 3 |
| Public Campgrounds | 1 | 18 | 41 | 32 | 10 |
| Private Campgrounds | - | 12 | 23 | 5 | 6 |
| Other | 29 | 7 | 11 | 18 | 22 |
| Activities: % Business | 12 | 39 | 13 | - | 17 |
| Convention | - | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Shopping | 46 | 15 | 10 | 9 | 34 |
| VFR | 89 | 20 | 6 | 14 | 62 |
| Sightseeing | 33 | 23 | 35 | 68 | 32 |
| Camping | 32 | 9 | 22 | 41 | 26 |
| Fishing | - | 6 | 8 | 4 | 2 |
| Hunting | 10 | 1 | * | * | 7 |

# TABLE 13 CONTINUED

3

| Trip Characteristics (Cont'd.) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CHARACTERISTICS | MARKET | | | | ALL VISITORS |
| | B.C. RESIDENTS | OTHER CANADIANS | U.S. TOURISTS | OTHER INT'L. | |
| Activities: % Boating | 7 | 5 | 2 | 14 | 6 |
| Skiing | - | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Golf | - | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Visiting Museums and Historic Sites | 16 | NA | NA | NA | 16 |
| Attending Festivals and Events | 8 | 16 | 7 | 14 | 9 |
| Swimming | NA | 5 | 7 | 23 | 6 |
| Expenditure: % Accommodation | 8 | 17 | 15 | 27 | 11 |
| Meals | 12 | 26 | 16 | 12 | 15 |
| Groceries | 17 | 22 | 12 | 11 | 17 |
| Transportation | 45 | 20 | 48 | 19 | 40 |
| Recreation and Entertainment | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Shopping and Souvenirs | 16 | 7 | 5 | 28 | 13 |
| Other | * | 3 | 2 | * | 1 |
| Average/Person/Day (1979 Dollars) | $15.00 | $29.00 | $21.00 | $21.00 | $19.00 |
| | | | | | |

Sources: B.C. Research; 1974 and 1979 Visitors Surveys and 1976 Residents Surveys.
Statistics Canada; Canadian Travel Surveys, 1977 2nd Quarter, 1978 3rd Quarter, and 1978 4th Quarter.
Reports on Specialty Markets Sponsored by T.I.D.S.A.

A relatively large proportion of visitors participate in outdoor activities, notably camping and hunting. Fishing is also popular with out-of-province visitors. To the extent that data is available, it appears that the Region's museums and historic sites attract a fair number of visitors. The W.A.C. Bennett Dam is probably included in this category. Relatively few visitors attend festivals and events in the region suggesting that there are few such activities of more than local interest; understandable, given the Region's small population base.

Expenditures by B.C. residents are fairly low, particularly accommodation and restaurant expenditures. This is attributable to the very high proportion of visitors who stay with friends and relatives. In contrast, out-of-province visitors have relatively high expenditures particularly on groceries and transportation.

## 3.5 Development Implications

### 3.5.1 General Marketing

The population growth rate in the Region and the high proportion of young people point to a need to develop recreational facilities and to make the Region's resources more accessible to local residents. In the short run, this market should receive top priority. Nonetheless, some of the Region's resources already appeal to a wide market. Income generating activities such as heli-skiing, big game hunting, and river rafting, could expand with better promotion. Major capital outlays would not be required except for suitable accommodations at the "take-off" point.

Other opportunities for package tours include snowmobiling and dude ranching. Preferably these activities should be combined in the same area to enable hoteliers to achieve year-round occupancy.

In the short run, however, the largest markets will remain the local populace and business and pass-through traffic. These markets will require hotels with good ground-floor facilities for the local and business markets in the major centres, and motels and campgrounds with good highway access.

In the course of their 1979 Survey of Visitors to British Columbia, B.C. Research asked respondents to list their particular likes and dislikes about the regions they had visited. Visitors to the Region were particularly enthusiastic about the scenery and the people. A relatively large number said they liked everything about the Region. The roads came in for a very high number of complaints, and prices were mentioned fairly often. Campsites received about as much unfavourable reaction as favourable, but roofed accommodations were not mentioned. Restaurants and cleanliness were generally mentioned favourably.

### 3.5.2 Accommodation Requirements

In 1978, an estimated 513,000 person trips were made to the Region. Adjusting for persons passing through the Region, and multiplying by the average number of nights spent in the Region results in an estimate of 2,300,000 person nights spent in the Region in that year. By 1983, total person-nights is expected to increase to between 2,690,000 and 3,473,000.

The 1976 resident survey by B.C. Research shows that only 10% of visitors from other parts of the province stayed in commercial roofed accommodations, and only one per cent stayed at public and private campgrounds. On the other hand, almost 29% of respondents reported that they had camped "elsewhere". The 1979 Visitors Survey of out-of-province visitors shows a much stronger preference for roofed accommodations. Since there has been considerable new development in roofed accommodations, a more current survey of resident visitors would likely reveal a pattern of accommodation uses closer to those of other visitors. On this assumption, an estimated 563,000 person nights were spent in commercial roofed accommodations in 1978. This is projected to increase to between 665,000 and 863,000 person nights by 1983, barring any further swing in preference for hotels and motels.

In 1979, the Tourism B.C. Accommodation Directory listed 1,450 hotel and motel units in the Region. Based on an average guests per occupied unit of 1.33, the tourist occupancy rate would have been about 79%. This is extraordinarily high, since it does not include work crews, or other semi-permanent visitors in commercial accommodation and does not account for demand by commercial truckers. The implication is that with the considerably new construction and expansion of hotel and motel space in the Region in recent years, some of the units which came on stream in 1979 were not included in the directory. For this reason, it is difficult to quantify the amount of additional space which will be required to accommodate future demand. However, at 75% occupancy, tourism will generate a total demand for 1,800 to 2,400 units by 1983. In 1979, the Accommodation Directory listed 960 campsites in the Region. Assuming they were open only during the summer months, there were about 148,000 site-nights available. Demand for space in 1978 is estimated at 223,000 site-nights. The deficit, though perhaps partly due to omissions in the directory, explains the high number of tourist who camped "elsewhere".

By 1983, tourists will generate a demand for between 2,400 and 2,900 campsites at 65% occupancy.

# 4.0 LOCAL TOURISM ISSUES, CONCERNS AND OBJECTIVES

## 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 examines the social component of tourism in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. The general attitudes towards the tourism industry are described; the tourism strengths, markets and opportunities as perceived by residents of the area, and the issues and concerns related to tourism development are presented. At the end of the chapter, locally defined tourism objectives are listed. Discussions held during, and briefs received at, the two public forums held in Fort St. John and Hudson's Hope in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Region provided all the information and data for this chapter. A total of 25 individuals and 12 groups attended the forums, and seven briefs were submitted. Government and municipal groups were represented as were a number of associations, societies and private individuals. Special interviews were also conducted in Fort Nelson. MacKenzie residents attended the forum in Prince George.1)

## 4.2 General Attitudes Towards Tourism

The attitude of forum participants towards development of the tourist industry seems to be good, and tourism activity is viewed with favour. The attitudes of local residents to tourists, at least in Fort Nelson, are friendly. However, due to the relatively small number of tourists in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region, there is limited interaction between local residents and tourists. Tourism has a modest economic impact on most of the Region with the exception of outfitters and guides. Because there is low unemployment in the Region and high wages in other economic sectors, some towns experience a shortage of manpower in the service sector. The tourism industry is therefore seen as a supplement to the local economy, rather than a mainstay. However, it was felt the industry is just starting to grow and a unique industry can be developed. It was stated by one forum participant that the major responsibility for developing the tourism industry lies with the private sector. An examination of the existing tourism industry in Fort Nelson showed that local residents are very hospitable towards tourists, and that the industry currently has little or no impact on local facilities, services or infrastructure.

## 4.3 Perceived Tourism Strengths and Opportunities

### 4.3.1 Perceived Tourism Strengths

A number of forum participants felt that tourism development in the northern part of British Columbia has good possibilities because of the scenic beauty and range of wilderness which will draw people as southern regions get more crowded. Potential exists to make the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region a destination area for adventure tourism. Many outdoor recreational possibilities are available in addition to hunting and fishing; particularly noted were mountaineering, hiking, and jet boating. The area has historical resources as yet minimally developed, which include Hudson Bay Company history in MacKenzie and Hudson's Hope, and there are dinosaur fossils. The local community of Hudson's Hope is the third oldest urban area in the province. Although cultural attractions are lacking, assets like the W.A.C. Bennett Dam draw thousands of tourists annually.

### 4.3.2 Perceived Tourism Opportunities

It was felt that the north has a number of assets which can serve to attract tourists -- wilderness, a scarcity of people and a "last frontier" kind of feeling. Several general suggestions were made for the further promotion of hunting and fishing, further development of jet boat tours and hot springs, and non-consumptive wilderness viewing as potential opportunities. The development of package (e.g., ecology tours) and circle tours was also suggested.

Mountaineering, water-oriented outdoor recreation and winter outdoor recreation all have excellent potential. It was felt that the area needs more off-road attractions like parks, scenic drives, pull-offs, wildlife sanctuaries and ecological reserves. Certain parks were specifically mentioned as requiring expansion and up-grading (Muncho Lake, Stone Mountain, Kwadacha and Tatlatui) while others should be built (in the Monkman - Kakwa and Redfern - Fairy Lakes areas). Certain other areas in the Region were mentioned as ideal for trail development - Mt. Johnson, Mt. Gething, Butler Ridge, Monarch, Mt. Roy and Portage Mountain.

A number of forum participants discussed the importance of restoring heritage sites, especially Hudson's Hope, and the development of an early explorer theme. Other suggestions were an Alaska Highway Museum in Dawson Creek and an expanded museum at Hudson's Hope. The hydro electric facilities in the Region (Peace Canyon and W.A.C. Bennett) draw many tourists but at present have no facilities, such as a restaurant or gift shop, to serve them, although these are planned. Off Highway 97, the town of MacKenzie possesses a number of historical and physical attractions with could be used to attract tourists. A number of suggestions were made about possible developments; for example, a wilderness retreat could also be used as a mini-convention centre and think tank. A number of forum participants felt that the upgrading and expansion of Azu Ski Village would attract tourists to the Region. Other possibilities are houseboat tours on Williston Lake, restoration of old buildings on McLeod Lake, and further development of helicopter skiing in the Pine Pass area. Finally, it was mentioned that the revival of passenger rail service to the area would help draw tourists to the Region.

## 4.4 Issues and Concerns Regarding Tourism Development

One of the main issues which arose at the forums was the need for better promotion and marketing of the area. It was suggested that a common agency be established to promote the special features of the Northwest.[2)] Multilingual literature is needed and agencies should be established in most potential markets, especially in Western Europe. Furthermore, advertising should be aimed at specific groups within specific markets.

It was suggested that the province should implement a planning program in order to organize and coordinate the resources of public agencies, and coordinate tourism with ongoing economic activities. It was felt also that the role of the regional tourism coordinators should be strengthened and diversified to include a responsibility for formulating and assisting in regional tourism development plans. Finally, an overall outdoor recreation plan for the province was suggested.

A variety of opinions were expressed about the B.C. Hydro Site C proposal near Fort St. John. Few participants favoured it, as agricultural land and heritage resources will be lost and shoreline stability decreased, but it was felt to be inevitable and could result in new recreational possibilities. Concern was also expressed about the possible impacts of the Liard River hydro project which could cause flooding of the hot springs park. In general, good resource management is an important issue in Northern British Columbia. A representative from the West Moberley Native Indian Band noted that Native Indians take part in the area's guiding and outfitting activities, and would like their history developed as a complement to the Region. However, concern over traplines and other special cultural/environmental issues as they relate to tourism development were also expressed.

The need to make Williston Lake less dangerous for recreational use was raised. Finally, it was mentioned that while tourism is desirable, the people's social and cultural heritage should not be ignored; There should not be an attempt to get maximum revenues at minimal costs.

### 4.4.1 Seasonal Aspects

The short tourism season in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region is now a major problem. It was suggested that efforts be made to further promote winter activities such as ice fishing and snowmobiling.

## 4.5 Weaknesses as a Tourism Area

The main weaknesses of the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region are its distance from the major tourism markets and its lack of facilities and services. Representatives from all the area's towns - Hudson's Hope, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John and Fort Nelson, -reported a scarcity of accommodation. While more hotels, motels and restaurants are needed, of special importance are more campgrounds of different types, from wilderness to fully serviced sites.

Poor signage is a problem in the area, especially to the Bennett Dam, as are poor secondary roads into scenic areas. A number of highways need upgrading, including the Hart Highway, and more highway pull-offs should be constructed.

A number of parks in the area (for example, Jackfish Lake, Stone Mountain and Muncho Lake) are not developed for intensive use and access to them is often difficult. Finally, there is a lack of recreational facilities such as golf courses and swimming pools. Some historical resources have not been identified and others are not adequately interpreted.

## 4.6 Tourism Linkages

The various Chambers of Commerce and historical societies seem to be very interested in tourism development and the latter had many suggestions for potential opportunities.

## 4.7 Locally Defined Tourism Objectives

A number of objectives relating to future development of the tourism industry in the Region arose in the discussions and submissions at the public forums. Although some opposition might exist, these objectives seem to be fairly commonly held.

- development of more accommodation in the Region, especially campsites.
- improvement of access into the wilderness areas.
- better co-ordination and planning with the tourism industry.
- development of the Region's historical resources.
- establishment of more facilities and attractions for tourists, e.g., parks, museums, trails; also major travel generators.
- improvement of roads and signage.
- improvement of advertising and marketing of the Region.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Because of prevailing travel patterns, organizations from MacKenzie presented their submissions and comments at the forum in Prince George. However, their comments have been included in this discussion. Both the District of MacKenzie and the Morfee Heritage Group in MacKenzie made submissions relevant to this Region.

2. The Northwest is a broad area encompassing all of the Peace River-Alaska Highway and Yellowhead 16 Tourism Regions, the Peace Block in Alberta, Yukon, Alaska and the western portion of the Northwest Territories.

3. In the Yellowhead 16 Tourism Region.

# 5.0 PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## 5.1 Introduction

The importance of a provincial tourism strategy has been well documented and it is generally recognized that in a large and diverse province such as British Columbia, a systematic approach is essential to adequately meet the objectives of government and private industry sectors.

The tourism industry in British Columbia has been characterized by fragmented growth and lack of planned development. The relatively uncoordinated development of the province's natural, historic and cultural resources to varying levels of quality presents some problematic areas for the future of tourism development, especially when assessed against the anticipated market requirements of the 1980s and 90s. The provincial tourism strategy will provide comprehensive short and long term direction for the industry.

Many of the reasons for supporting a provincial strategy may also be applied at the regional level. First, the preparation of a regional tourism development strategy will enable the industry to indicate its long range goals and objectives, identify programs required to meet these goals and objectives, and define the resources and support activities/services required from the various levels of government and the public sector to implement the plan and retain tourism as a long term stable industry; in so doing, the industry will be placed in a much better position to obtain the required recognition, resources and support. Second, the regional plan will provide a basis for integrating the industry's own activities, and enhance its ability to set area, corridor and site specific priorities, assess the effects of allocating land to different uses and identify the differences in tourism outputs, and monitor the effectiveness of its actions. Third, through the strategy, local, regional and national trends and events can be taken into account when implementing the program, monitoring existing developments and providing new direction.

## 5.2 Framework for the Preparation of Tourism Development Strategies

A tourism development strategy strives to meld a myriad of goals, objectives and policies of importance to governmental agencies, private tourist operators and local residents into a co-ordinated program that optimizes the "public good" to a region, derived from the development and use of the natural and man-made resources. Hence, it is a necessity that the tourism development strategy and its related development recommendations are the result of a logical process that establishes broad goals and principles, and within this context, identifies and evaluates competing goals and resource demands, determines their relative importance and appropriateness, and allocates basic priorities to them. Only in such a manner can the final choices and directions embodied in the approved tourism plan be explained and justified.

A comprehensive process has been used in the preparation of the tourism development strategy for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region; specifically, the steps in this planning process were:

a) within the context of the provincial strategy, the assessment of the resources, markets and the goals and objectives for the Region;

b) the identification of specific goals and objectives of the industry and public interest groups to be addressed by the tourism development strategy;

c) the establishment of guidelines, principles and policies which defined the acceptability of alternative courses of action within the existing planning context;

d) the identification, evaluation and selection of a regional development concept;

e) the identification and assessment of appropriate development concepts, associated development opportunities and projected tourism market and trip characteristics for all planning units that will satisfy the tourism goals and objectives for the Region;

f) determination of appropriate sub-strategies for the implementation of the development concepts.

## 5.3 Provincial Tourism Development Strategy

The provincial tourism strategy identifies the short and long-range opportunities for the public and private sectors of the industry on a province-wide basis. The conclusions reached were presented in the form of planning, development and implementation sub-strategies and were based on an analysis of the resource opportunities, existing infrastructure, government and industry objectives, market assessment and implications of emerging socio-economic trends including energy. Based on these analyses, the following Provincial Strategy or policy statement emerged:

> "To identify and encourage the development of high quality tourism resource opportunities and destination areas through a nodal corridor concept that will attract international, U.S and domestic markets to complement existing provincial and regional markets with specific attention to changing tourism leisure trends and the world energy situation".

This policy statement recognized several province-wide goals to be realized by the Plan. Clearly, the Plan identified that a gradual shift in the nature of tourism throughout the province should occur with the existing rather fragmented tourist facilities and services to become a more centralized, concentrated destination industry, oriented toward specific resident and non-resident market sectors.

The direction of the industry would be toward providing high quality, activity-based facilities to a broad market with an emphasis on group travel by mass mode. An important element in the Plan, as reflected in the above, is the concern that resource development meet future market requirements and include both short and long-range objectives rather than the narrow approach and low capital investment. It is expected that this will result in a gradual redistribution of quality tourism amenities that will generate higher visitor expenditures but respect the biophysical and social carrying capacity of an area. This tourism policy is to have a long-term framework and during the initial transition period major emphasis is to be placed on investment in, and development of, tourism destination areas.

Because of the scale and complexity of British Columbia, the provincial strategy recommended that tourism planning for the province acknowledge four different orientations: economic, resource, market and conserver. The sub-strategies based on these orientations have been applied to each of the tourism regions and part of regions where warranted. For each sub-strategy an appropriate planning, development and implementation approach is identified. As stated in the Provincial Strategy, the resource oriented planning sub-strategy has been recommended for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. Also cited in the regional strategy statement are the Alaska Highway and the Dawson Creek-Fort St. John area which are to receive a market approach to tourism planning. An economic orientation was suggested for the Bennett Dam area.

Generally for the Region, the high quality and high capability natural, human and historic resources are to be identified and used in association with other available resources to develop tourism/recreation nodes within the Region. The capability and tolerance of the particular resources are to be used in determining the location and intensity of future development and the direction of the tourism industry as it responds to the market pressures being generated by growing regional and nearby Alberta populations along with auto-touring markets of the Alaska Highway. The resource orientation was derived in recognition of the sensitivity and limited carrying capacity of the northern environment.

The market orientation for the Dawson Creek-Fort St. John area was suggested because of its advantageous location on the Alaska Highway touring route and the growth of its resource-based economy. The Bennett Dam area has notable historical and recreational resources that could be developed to give a long term supplementary economic base. Thus the economic approach to tourism planning should be considered. The Alaska Highway travel corridor should be developed in response to the needs of touring markets with emphasis placed on nodal development. The existing market awareness of the Region's extensive water and land-based resources, the growing popularity of adventure vacations in concert with the potential for specialty attractions based on the natural resources and heritage themes can provide further opportunities for tourism development.

For the Development Strategy, the provincial document proposed to market and manage the high quality fish, wildlife and scenic resources of the Region to accommodate non-resident, high expenditure market segments and to extend the tourism season. Road access into large areas will remain difficult or non-existent necessitating the use of guiding, outfitting and fly-in services. Private sector efforts to provide more accommodation and services for pass-through traffic are required. These services along the Alaska Highway should be concentrated in distinct nodes to control haphazard development and be economically viable. Improved tourist facilities and attractions at the Bennett Dam area to increase the length of visitor stay were cited as a means of providing economic benefits. Local and regional recreation needs were to be recognized and provided for.

The implementation strategy is the third component of the provincial tourism development strategy and is essentially concerned with the type, timing and distribution of public and private investment required to achieve the region, area, or corridor development objectives. In response to the planning and development strategies adopted for the region an "Optimize Future Benefits" implementation approach is proposed that will apply until market demands increase substantially, probably towards the end of the five-year planning horizon. A more detailed assessment of the resource/market opportunities and constraints would also be required. For the Alaska Highway and Dawson Creek-Fort St. John area a free enterprise approach is proposed in response to increasing tourist and business traffic.

The Yellowhead 16 Tourism Region to the south and west will likely receive considerable attention in the development of tourism resources as it has been assigned an economic planning orientation. Because of the strong road travel corridor linkages and the similarity of many of the resource opportunities, development should proceed in a complementary and reinforcing manner to achieve provincial level tourism objectives and benefits. Close attention must be given to changing conditions in the neighbouring region of Alberta as the growing communities provide a considerable portion of the tourist markets.

## 5.4 Regional Tourism Development Strategy

A regional tourism development strategy for the purposes of this Plan is considered to be a statement of broad goals and policies outlining a general course of action for the growth, maintenance and development of the industry leading towards the establishment of priorities for resource development, program formulation, and management procedures. The strategy is to reflect government, community and private sector goals and concerns, be sufficiently broad in scope and flexible in approach to accommodate unforeseen development, and be responsive to a wide variety of short and long-term specialty markets and resource development opportunities.

The various elements identified in the above were considered in the regional planning process and it was confirmed that the development concept proposed in the Provincial Tourism Development Strategy as outlined in Section 5.3, is well suited to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. More detailed research and analysis have confirmed a number of constraints and opportunities that were previously suspected. Some of the constraints identified include the limited accommodation base and need for upgrading in key areas, the reliance on sport fishing as a major tourism activity throughout the Region, major limitations in the use of reservoirs for recreation, restricted consumptive recreation activities due to low biological productivity, and competition from other northern tourism areas. A number of important opportunities have also been acknowledged including growing regional and nearby Alberta markets, capacity for the development of attractions, positive local attitudes towards tourism, the high capability for extensive land and water-based recreation and several others.

Based on the various constraints, opportunities and local and regional considerations as outlined in Section 5.2, the development concept has been refined and is presented as the tourism policy statement for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region (Figure 1). The Region-wide development concept or policy is:

> To capitalize on and gradually develop the Region in recognition of its role as a pass-through area for travellers along the Alaska Highway and as a destination area for non-residents who come to enjoy the high quality fish, wildlife and scenic resources. The natural resource base must be carefully managed to maintain the quality of the visitor's experience recognizing the sensitivity of the northern environment and the continuing high impact activities of extractive/industrial operations. The limited access through much of the Region will necessitate the continued use of guiding, outfitting and fly-in operators

> who will be encouraged to expand their season of operation and their clientele by offering non-consumptive experiences. Large areas should be designated as roadless to maintain the viability of outfitting services and to protect sensitive northern wilderness landscapes. Efforts must be made by the private and public sectors, with support from the resource companies, to provide an increased array of activities and attractions to extend the stay of pass-through markets. Efforts should be focussed on the Peace River Plateau and the Peace Reach as the infrastructure and base for attractions already exist. Throughout the Region, but especially along the Alaska Highway, public and private sector traveller amenities should be improved and concentrated in specific nodes. The recreational needs of the growing regional population will take precedence in certain areas.

This policy statement outlines the rationale to guide the future preparation of development proposals for the Region as a whole and to ensure the continuance of a healthy tourism industry. Both the regional development concept (policy) and the development concepts for each of the 16 planning units (Figure 1) are intended to guide tourism development within the Region and to reduce uncertainty within both the public and private sectors as to future development by establishing an overall systems approach with guidelines and principles for tourism growth. These statements will indicate tourism development intent within the planning horizon and accordingly should be integrated with resource management plans.

A systematic approach to tourism planning is required in order to obtain the maximum short and long-term efficiencies from the available resources and markets. Through a systems approach, the various levels of government and the private sector can evaluate or judge a range of alternatives for their contributions to the goals of the Region. This analysis will provide the information on which agencies and others affected by tourism can base judgements as to the possible benefits and potential conflicts that will arise. Within the tourism industry, it has become evident that area development without direction creates internal competition and may be detrimental to the industry as a whole. A systems approach therefore, provides a guide to both the public and private sectors, a plan to evaluate proposed actions, and an important tool in gaining co-operation from public sector agencies.

In promoting the orderly and economic growth of the Peace River/ Alaska Highway Tourism Region from a tourism perspective, the policies, market and implementation strategies are geared to securing an optimum balance and spatial distribution of the types of tourism activities, to the identification of existing and future market opportunities, and to safeguard environmental quality, heritage, and social and economic benefits for the Region. It is anticipated that tourism will begin to exercise a greater influence on the course and direction of economic development in designated growth areas and on regional planning throughout the study area.

In order for the strategy to maintain a reasonable degree of flexibility to accommodate the diversity of conditions in the Region, an attempt is made to direct future growth by policy statements for each planning unit or groups of planning units rather than by designating a large number of specific proposals or use areas. While the development strategy is designed to be flexible, major technological advances and changes in the energy situation could develop which might affect the programs and policies and development of the Plan. Therefore, the policy statements for the Peace River/Alaska Highway Tourism Region should be reviewed at regular intervals (possibly every five years) to provide for the changing needs of the residents of the planning area, both permanent and seasonal, as well as other market and resource factors affecting the Region.

In Figure 1, Regional Development Strategy, the develpment concepts for the Region and each of the 16 planning units are outlined, and the projected tourism markets and characteristics

# Regional Development Strategy

## Figure 1

**Regional Development Concept**

To capitalize on and gradually develop the region in recognition of its role as a pass-through area for travellers along the Alaska Highway and as a destination area for non-residents who come to enjoy the high quality fish wildlife and scenic resources. The natural resource base must be carefully managed to maintain the quality of the visitor's experience recognizing the sensitivity of the northern environment and the continuing high impact activities of extractive/industrial operations. The limited access through much of the region will necessitate the continued use of guiding, outfitting and fly-in operators who will be encouraged to expand their season of operation and their clientele by offering non-consumptive experiences. Areas should be designated as roadless to maintain the viability of outfitting services and to protect sensitive northern wilderness landscapes. Efforts must be made by the private and public sectors, with support from the resource companies, to provide an increased array of activities and attractions to extend the stay of pass-through markets. Efforts should be focussed on the Peace River Plateau and the Peace Reach as the infrastructure and base for attractions is already in existance. Throughout the region but especially along the Alaska Highway, public and private sector traveller amenities should be improved and concentrated in specific nodes. The recreational needs of the growing regional population will take precedence in certain areas.

### Tourism Market and Trip Characteristics

| Planning Unit Development Concept | | PRIMARY MARKETS/BY SEASON W-WINTER Sp-SPRING S-SUMMER F-FALL | | | | | GROUP MODE/ DURATION (days) | | PRIMARY TRIP PURPOSE | | | | | | | TRANSPORTATION MODE ALTERNATIVES | | | | | | ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES | | | | | | | | | Implementation Strategy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | International | U.S. | Domestic | Provincial | Regional | Single/Family Groups | Package Tours | Four Season Vacation Resorts | Non-Urban Scenic Touring | Urban Site-Seeing | Special Purpose Recreation | Experience New Cultures & Lifestyles | Warm Weather Outdoor Recreation | Cool Weather Outdoor Recreation | Fly/drive | Rail | Auto/Bus | Boat | Boat/auto | Boat/rail | Boating/Canoeing | Fishing | Other Water Sports/Activities | Alpine Skiing/ Cross-Country Skiing Heli-Skiing | Hunting/ Wildlife Viewing | Structured Outdoor Recreation Activities Golf, Tennis | Active Land-Based Outdoor Recreation Activity Riding, Climbing, Hiking | Historical Attractions/ Cultural or Popular Events | Special Features or Developments | |
| LIARD PLAIN AND LIARD/RABBIT PLATEAU<br>Maintain the rolling, forested landscape of these two units and manage the resources to provide extensive recreation opportunities. Designate the Liard as a Wild and Scenic River for quality commercial rafting and for canoeing/kayaking experiences and designate the Kechika as a Wilderness River. Prepare a master plan for the Liard Hot Springs Park improving/expanding visitor facilities while maintaining the character. Hydro development is regarded as detrimental to the tourism resources of this part of the region. | RESOURCE | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ● | ●<br>1-3 | ●<br>1-3 | | ● | | ● | | ● | | ● | | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | | ●<br>● | | ● | | | OPTIMIZE FUTURE BENEFITS |
| MUSKWA ROCKY MOUNTAINS, KECHIKA/FINLAY TRENCH, CASSIAR MOUNTAINS AND TATLATUI PLATEAU<br>Protect wilderness character of all four contiguous units to enable individuals/commercial guides/outfitters to operate for backcountry canoeing, river rafting, fishing, hunting, hiking, trail riding, mountaineering and wildlife viewing. Designate Kechika and Gataga as Wilderness Rivers with adjacent parts of units declared roadless areas especially near Kwadacha and Tatlatui Parks. Develope camping/interpretive opportunities along Alaska Highway corridor. | CONSERVER | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>2-10 | ●<br>2-10 | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ●<br>● | ●<br>● | | ● | | | OPTIMIZE FUTURE BENEFITS |
| OMINECA MOUNTAINS<br>Considerable resource extraction activity has made large areas of this unit accessible for backcountry recreation use. Integrated resource management should be practiced to maintain the quality of the fish, wildlife and scenic resources. Extensive types of development and use are most appropriate. | RESOURCE | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>2-7 | | | ● | | ● | | ● | | | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ●<br>● | ●<br>● | | ● | | | OPTIMIZE FUTURE BENEFITS |
| TAKLA/NATION PLATEAU<br>A large part of this unit and the southernmost part of the Omineca Mountains unit should be managed as an Outdoor Recreation Area in recognition of the quality water-based opportunities provided by the numerous lakes and rivers, the considerable tourist use by Prince George area residents and fishing lodge guests. The fish wildlife and scenic resources should be managed to maintain the quality of the experience. The Nation Lakes chain should be designated as a Recreational Waterway for boating and canoeing. | RESOURCE | | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>2-5 | | | ● | | ● | | ● | | ● | | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ●<br>● | ●<br>● | | | ● | | FREE ENTERPRISE |
| WILLISTON/PARSNIP VALLEY<br>Continue to improve access to the southern part of Williston Lake and intensify reservoir clearing efforts to improve the boating capability for the medium and long term. Establish Mackenzie as a centre for water-based activities on the reservoir and for extensive activities in the surrounding mountains and plateaus. | RESOURCE | | | | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>1-3 | | | ● | | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ●<br>● | ●<br>● | | ● | ● | | FREE ENTERPRISE |
| WAPITI/PINE FOOTHILLS AND HART/MISINCHINKA RANGES<br>Continuing resource extraction activities, improved access and increasing regional recreation demands require that integrated resource management plans be instituted with particular attention paid to fish, wildlife and backcountry recreation objectives. A large outdoor recreation area should be designated encompassing Moberly, Gwillim, Moose Lakes, the Murray River and Falls. Consideration should be given to establishing a park in the Monkman Pass area. | RESOURCE | | | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>2-5 | | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ●<br>●<br>● | ●<br>● | | ● | | ● | FACILITATE GROWTH |
| PEACE REACH<br>Improve boating access to the Peace Reach and intensify the reservoir clearing efforts to improve boating capability. Develop the Reach as a land and water-based outdoor recreation area for regional residents and tourists. Develop Hudson's Hope as a tourism centre based on the attractions of the Bennet dam, future reservoir-based recreation, historical and palaeontological resources. | ECONOMY | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>2-5 | ●<br>1-2 | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | | ●<br>● | | ● | ● | ● | FACILITATE GROWTH |
| PEACE RIVER PLATEAU<br>The existing large population centres and the transportation network will dictate that the main tourism service centres will be established in the unit. Develop Dawson Creek as an orientation point for travellers along the "Golden Circle" Northern Loop Tour. A variety of themed attractions based on indigenous energy and natural resources should be developed to extend the length of stay of pass-through Alaska Highway traffic. A guide outfitters centre should be established to provide short term as well as extended fly-in wilderness experiences for visitors. | MARKET | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>2-3 | ●<br>2-3 | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | ●<br>● | ●<br>● | ● | ● | ● | ● | FACILITATE GROWTH |
| SIKANNI/MUSKWA FOOTHILLS AND BEATTON/SIKANNI PLATEAU<br>Maintain the existing character of the unit as a backcountry and wilderness recreation area for use by commercial guides and outfitters, regional residents and visitors in the face of increasing resource extraction activities. Management of the scenic resources, rivers, fish and wildlife populations is required to sustain increased tourism use. | RESOURCE | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F | ●<br>1-2 | ●<br>1-3 | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ●<br>● | | ● | | | OPTIMIZE FUTURE BENEFITS |
| FORT NELSON LOWLAND<br>Establish Fort Nelson as a local tourism service centre and as a gateway for northern river travel along the Liard - Mackenzie System. Continue to expand and upgrade local events that contribute to the distinct northern image. Establish canoe routes along the tributary rivers and manage the fish and wildlife resources for increased tourism use by individuals and guide outfitters. | RESOURCE | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>Sp,S,<br>F,W | ●<br>1-5 | ●<br>1-2 | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ●<br>● | | | ● | ● | OPTIMIZE FUTURE BENEFITS |

identified. The matrix shows the planning and implementation strategies and the tourism market and trip characteristics to be considered in realizing the development concepts. It is noteworthy that only two landscape/planning units (Peace River Plateau and Peace Reach) have planning strategies that are not resource or conserver oriented and they are the only areas with implementation strategies requiring significant public sector involvement. This is, of course, in keeping with the resource-oriented planning and development approach derived for the Region in the provincial strategy.

The primary markets are North American consisting largely of American, Albertan, provincial and regional segments. All but four landscape units can attract high expenditure international and U.S. markets largely through the renowned wilderness guide/outfitter operators. Non urban sightseeing is a part of visiting all landscape units. Special purpose recreation can be pursued during the warm weather season in virtually every landscape unit while cool weather recreation is likely limited to hardy, adventurous tourists in three units. Travel will continue to be largely by individuals and families for the foreseeable future although package tours will become more popular especially in the Peace Plateau and Peace Reach units and along the Alaska Highway. Fly-in access will also continue to be an important part of the northern experience.

The water base is extremely important in providing a complete range of boating experiences from canoeing and river rafting to jet boating. The consumptive activities of fishing and hunting are also very important tourism activities with wildlife viewing becoming more popular. Thus every effort should be made to safeguard and enhance the fish and wildlife populations and habitats. The scope and number of opportunities for structured outdoor activities is very limited while extensive land-based opportunities are virtually everywhere throughout the Region, although little exists in the way of formal, designated trails.

The Region has considerable capability to develop several heritage themes including distinctive palaeontological resources although they have received only a limited degree of attention to this point. There are also other special man-made features that can help to extend the scope of the visitor's experience related to the exploitation of the Region's considerable natural energy resources.

It is anticipated that the scope and intent of the regional development strategy and the landscape/planning unit concepts will establish the general framework within which future development will be directed. The matrix indicates what tourism markets should be pursued, where the main types of tourism activities should occur and how they should be developed. In Chapter 6, the detailed development proposals derived from the concepts and the tourism market/resource opportunities are outlined.

## 5.5 Northern Tourism Region Boundaries

As has been mentioned several times in the preceding chapters and as was mentioned during the public involvement process, the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region is a very large area with diverse geographic/biological characteristics. This has made it very difficult to describe and assess the resources and derive the subsequent planning development and implementation strategies. It was suggested in the Provincial Tourism Strategy that consideration be given to dividing the two existing northern tourism regions, which together comprise almost half the province, into units of more manageable size and similar character. However, the consultants proceeded with the regional tourism plans on the basis of the two existing northern tourism regions although their boundaries had been adjusted somewhat in response to ideas presented in the Provincial Strategy.

Having completed the tourism plans for the two northern regions and dealt with the complexity of issues, resource analysis and tourism development problems, the consulting team reaffirms their earlier position as to the advisibility of restructuring the northern tourism regions. The consultant recommends that the boundaries of this Region along with the Yellowhead 16 Tourism Region be re-evaluated. It is further recommended that three northern tourism regions be delineated on the basis of landscape unit and resource management unit lines.

## 6.0 REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### 6.1 Introduction

In previous chapters, an assessment of resources and market analysis was undertaken and a summary of local attitudes, perceptions and policies was presented. This was followed by the development of a regional strategy, outlining a systematic approach to tourism planning and development in the Region. The basic framework and rationale for tourism development lies in the regional and planning unit development concepts as outlined in Chapter 5. The purpose of Chapter 6 is to highlight and describe the facility make-up of the regional plan and to identify specific guidelines and principles in the development of the Plan. In addition, suggestions are developed regarding additional research and feasibility studies to be undertaken in order to adequately assess a particular plan or proposal at the tertiary level of planning.

### 6.2 Guidelines and Principles

Derived from the study objectives, from resource inventories and analysis, from consultation with the private sector and from discussions with industry specialists, TIDSA officials and other government personnel, the consultants have developed the following set of guidelines and principles for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region. The guidelines and principles have been divided into three areas, namely, planning, development and marketing. While it is not within the scope of this study to establish definitive tourism policies, general policy areas can be outlined.

#### A. Planning

i) The intent of this study is to recommend a strategy for the growth and development of the tourism industry of the Peace

River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region through the identification of tourism developments and actions required to match plant capability with resource potential and market demands.

ii) The Plan resulting from this study is to be region-wide. Hence, the health of the tourism industry as a whole will take precedence over specific local demands or proposals.

iii) The Plan will recognize the roles and responsibilities of both public and private sectors in its recommendations outlining development opportunities, but specific measures for implementing the recommendations are to be the subject of discussions and negotiations between the private sector and senior levels of government. Hence, the Plan does not incorporate specific programs and measures for implementing its recommendations.

iv) The Plan is intended to outline, for both private and public sector consideration and financial investment, a systematic approach to the development of tourism opportunities. Where possible, the Plan is intended to reflect existing government policy.

v) The Plan recognizes that the various natural attractions and outdoor recreation opportunities provided by the river valley, mountain and plateau landscapes which contribute to the tourism potential of the Region (e.g. lakes, rivers, sport fishery and wildlife populations) must be protected and enhanced to ensure that the Region can continue to satisfy and accommodate increasing numbers of tourists.

vi) The Plan will reflect a sensitivity to the expectations and attitudes of local residents toward tourism and tourism development especially in Hudson's Hope, Fort St. John, Dawson Creek and Fort Nelson and other distinctive areas and communities. Through the consideration of social carrying capacities exhibited by these areas, the Plan will minimize the unwanted disruption of traditional lifestyles such as farming, grazing and logging.

vii) The Plan recognizes that significant numbers of tourists and regional residents could compete for the various man-made and natural attractions and outdoor recreation opportunities in the accessible southern part of the Region. Therefore, effort must be made to direct tourism development in a manner that resident enjoyment of the Region is not diminished and tourist-resident conflicts are avoided.

viii) The Plan will attempt to spread the economic benefits of the Vancouver and Edmonton international gateways to a variety of areas within the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region.

ix) The Plan will identify specific communities requiring improved streetscape appearance and themed architectural control and signage of the business districts and entrance areas; this is considered particularly important for communities on the major transportation routes.

x) The significant recreation and tourism potential of the Region should be given serious consideration in the use and management of Crown Lands. In this regard, co-ordination among the various agencies and levels of government is necessary.

xi) The type, character and market attraction of intervening opportunities, and tourism development proposed for neighbouring regions of the province, Alberta, the Yukon and Northwest Territories and Alaska, competing for the same markets were considered in the Provincial Tourism Development Strategy and have been assessed in the development of regional plans.

xii) Greater availability of information is required to direct tourists concerning lodges, package tours, accommodation, special events and attractions at tourism service centres and regional gateways.

xiii) The long range effect and geographical impact of societal trends and influences and their implications for the tourism industry are to be reflected in the range and character of development opportunities recommended in the Plan.

xiv) The Plan will be based upon the assumption that the importance of the tourism industry to the economy of the Region is recognized by other resource use, management or regulatory agencies, and that these agencies will incorporate the requirements of the Region's tourism industry into their various resource use policies, plans and programs.

xv) The Plan is based upon the assumption that all planning for the tourism industry will be done on a long term basis, with short term reviews, assessing the strategy's continued suitability to local, regional and provincial requirements.

xvi) The scenic character of valleys and adjacent mountain slopes, rolling plateaus, and of lake and river shorelines in areas with existing or proposed tourism use should be protected by the establishment of land management policies which recognize the scenic values.

xvii) The Plan will recognize the need to have its recommendations and development proposals reflected in the plans of the Regional Districts of Peace River, Liard, Fraser-Fort George and Bulkley-Nechako, to generate support for their implementation on an integrated rather than "piecemeal" basis.

## B. Development

i) The Plan will, wherever feasible, stress nodal development within specific extended stay/destination areas and provide a variety of primary and associated tourism opportunities of both a water-based and terrestrial nature.

ii) The Plan will stress the need to provide a certain density of facilities and programs in particular locations to establish a "critical mass" and "market awareness" beyond which the development of an identity and the creation of an awareness in the target market segments of the Region's tourism and vacation opportunities become feasible. This aspect is especially important in the establishment of extended stay/ destination areas.

iii) Nodal development will be encouraged because it localizes tourism activities and minimizes disturbances to other land uses.

iv) A unique method of funding the proposed developments and attractions related to the 'energy sources theme park' is suggested. Revenues derived from the sale of the natural resources e.g., oil, gas, hydro, coal, should be allocated (or a special tax levied) to provide the necessary capital to plan, design and construct the theme attractions. This could be regarded as a type of compensation to the Region and a means of providing an economic base for the future once the resources are exhausted and the extraction/employment activity ends.

v) The Plan will emphasize the development and use of high quality resources. Hence, development of marginal natural, historical or cultural resources will only be recommended if necessary to support the development and use of major nodal attractions.

vi) The Plan will recommend the upgrading of the existing tourism plant only where the plant meets, or has the potential for meeting, market expectations. Conversely, the Plan will not necessarily support existing facilities or attractions that are not providing and cannot provide the sophisticated requirements of the target market segments.

vii) The Plan will strive to associate the facilities, attractions, services and programs proposed for each major tourism centre with one or more major themes, giving it a distinct identity from those of other proposed development nodes. Such an identity will facilitate market segmentation, allocation and promotion.

viii) The development of new attractions should occur within designated tourism areas and ensure a wide variety of activities and events to broaden the tourism season. New shoulder season events and attractions should be established in recognized tourism centres in order to ensure their success in the short term.

ix) Where warranted, the Plan will endeavour to increase the competitive position of the Region's tourism industry by the provision of additional types of tourism, recreation and entertainment facilities with respect to all market segments.

x) Due to the limited transportation system to and within all parts of the Region away from the Alaska and Hart Highways, mass mode transportation to major tourism attractions and destination areas from gateway and service centres is to be explored and, where feasible, emphasized to lessen the impact of future energy-related travel dislocations. Bus (including mini-buses), rail and air access throughout the planning area is considered particularly appropriate in this part of British Columbia. Innovative fly-drive (using smaller recreational vehicles or automobile/tent/roofed accommodation packages), rail-drive and wilderness adventure vacations will help to "catch" the imagination of the tourist and disperse use across the Region.

xi) It is recognized (notwithstanding the above) that private vehicle travel will continue to be very important to the Region, especially the Alaska Highway adventure market; therefore, provisions should continue to be made for the rubber-tire market (e.g., service stations, repairs, meals, parking/camping areas) but with more emphasis on energy conserving vehicles and use of local "adventure" accommodation.

xii) Designation of access routes and backcountry outdoor recreation areas is required to ensure that adequate areas are provided for extensive recreation uses. Management of tourism travel corridors is required in order to obtain an integrated approach to planning/preservation of scenic resources and realization of the goals and objectives for highway corridors from a tourism perspective.

## C. Market

i) The Plan will focus on increasing the industry's penetration of the Region's traditional markets supported by substantial increases in the international high expenditure package tours, fly-R.V. drive, and specialty markets for activities such as river-rafting, remote lodge fishing/hunting, backcountry travel and wilderness tripping. Emerging specialty markets for culture/heritage attractions, kayaking/canoeing, and adventure tours will be pursued.

ii) Through a variety of avenues including clustered developments, theme associations, unique attractions, special events, market segmentation and well-directed promotional efforts, the Plan will seek to stimulate the development of a strong market identity for the Region based on the distinctive appeal of Canada's northern wilderness.

iii) Even though the Plan will focus on the Region's traditional markets (i.e., fly-in wilderness lodges, northern auto-touring, sport fishing and big game hunting), it will be future rather than status-quo oriented, will provide better and broader tourism experiences and will incorporate a sensitivity to, and flexibility for accommodating shifts in the types and quality of activities, attractions and services required by these traditional and other market segments.

iv) The Plan will encourage a strong effort being placed in retaining and expanding Canadian, U.S. West Coast and International markets through the development of a more competitive plant, the promotion of extensive northern package tours, improved international/charter air access, fly/R.V.drive adventure tours and by promoting the northern wilderness travel experience.

v) Extensive pressures for day use and weekend recreation facilities are generated by both the regional residents and nearby Albertan markets in accessible areas to the west and southwest of Fort St. John and Dawson Creek. The Plan will recognize the potential use conflicts and strive to reduce competition through facility location, development and programming for particular user groups.

vi) The Plan strives to capitalize on the market awareness and appeal of the Peace River country, Alaska Highway travel, Canada's northern experience and fly-in wilderness lodges. Promotional schemes should continue to strengthen these images. Programs should be developed to inform visitors at various gateway centres of the variety of tourism attractions and activities available in the Region to ensure tourists are able to fully enjoy the distinctive northern experience.

## 6.3 Tourism/Recreation Planning Hierarchy

The term "tourism" as defined in this study is extremely broad and associated with the use of a variety of natural resources, events, services and infrastructure. It is, therefore, considered important to introduce a hierarchy that reflects the types and levels of elements in the tourism/recreational field. The major elements of the hierarchy are: tourism destination/extended stay areas; tourism service centres; gateway cities; transportation routes/corridors; destination resorts; events and attractions; and parks and recreation areas.

The hierarchy has been prepared to assist in the development of a systematic approach to tourism planning and policy development programs on a regional, corridor and nodal basis. In establishing the hierarchy and the elements included therein, the study team has been cognizant of the following:

- Natural, physical, historical and cultural resources within the planning area.
- Existing tourism facilities/accommodation.
- Present travel trends, habits and activity preferences of resident and non-resident markets.
- Future needs and expectations of market segments.
- Local goals and objectives and recognition of local lifestyles.
- Goals and objectives of the study from both provincial and regional industry perspectives.

The hierarchy will assist in presenting a rationale for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region and allow easy comparison and analysis between regions.

## TABLE 14

## HIERARCHY OF DEVELOPMENT

Tourism Destination Areas
- Provincial
- Regional
- Extended Stay Area
- Outdoor Recreation Areas

Tourism Service Centres
- International
- Provincial
- Regional
- Local

Gateway Cities
- International
- Provincial
- Regional

Transportation Routes/Corridors
- Provincial Travel Corridor
- Regional Travel Corridor
- Specialized Routes Including:
  - Scenic Drive/Route
  - Eco Tour/Route
  - Historic Route
  - Backcountry Route
  - Wild and Scenic River
  - Recreational Waterway
  - Wilderness River

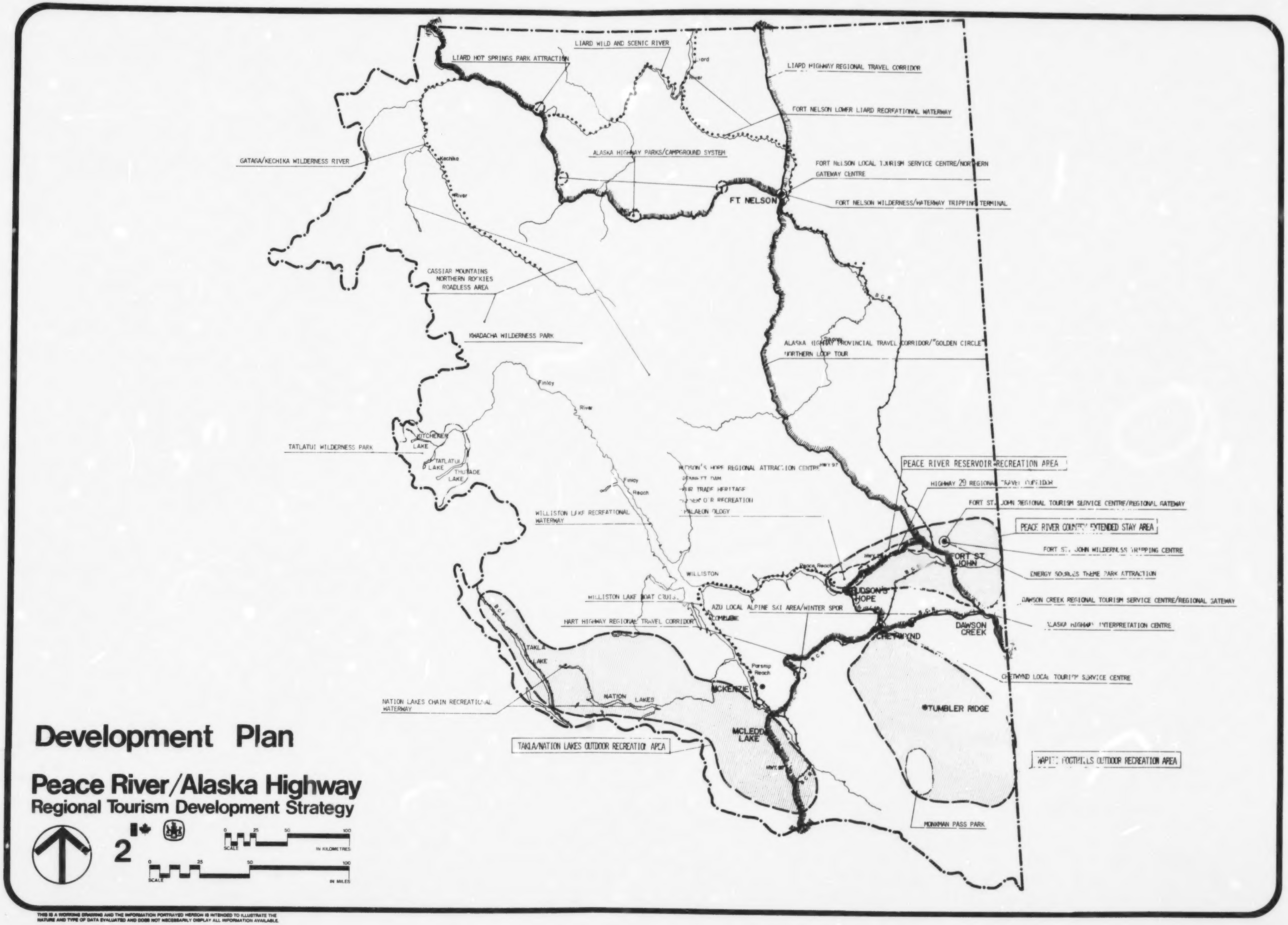
Tourism Destination Resorts, Events and Attractions

- Summer Resorts
- Winter Resorts
- Alpine Ski Areas
- Four-season Resorts
- Resort Community
- Tourism Attraction
- Tourism Events/Festivals
- Local Events/Attractions

Parks and Recreation Areas

- National Parks
- Provincial Parks
- Historic Parks
- Marine Parks
- Wilderness Parks or Conservancies

Definitions of the various terms used are presented in Appendix 1.


LIARD WILD AND SCENIC RIVER
LIARD HOT SPRINGS PARK ATTRACTION
Liard
River
LIARD HIGHWAY REGIONAL TRAVEL CORRIDOR
FORT NELSON LOWER LIARD RECREATIONAL WATERWAY
GATAGA/KECHIKA WILDERNESS RIVER
ALASKA HIGHWAY PARKS/CAMPGROUND SYSTEM
Kechika
River
FORT NELSON LOCAL TOURISM SERVICE CENTRE/NORTHERN GATEWAY CENTRE
FT. NELSON
FORT NELSON WILDERNESS/WATERWAY TRIPPING TERMINAL
CASSIAR MOUNTAINS NORTHERN ROCKIES ROADLESS AREA
KHADACHA WILDERNESS PARK
ALASKA HIGHWAY PROVINCIAL TRAVEL CORRIDOR/"GOLDEN CIRCLE" NORTHERN LOOP TOUR
B.C.R.
Finlay
River
TATLATUI WILDERNESS PARK
KITCHENER LAKE
TATLATUI LAKE
THUTADE LAKE
HUDSON'S HOPE REGIONAL ATTRACTION CENTRE
BENNETT DAM
FUR TRADE HERITAGE
OUTDOOR RECREATION
PALAEONTOLOGY
HWY 97
Finlay
Reach
PEACE RIVER RESERVOIR RECREATION AREA
HIGHWAY 29 REGIONAL TRAVEL CORRIDOR
FORT ST. JOHN REGIONAL TOURISM SERVICE CENTRE/REGIONAL GATEWAY
WILLISTON LAKE RECREATIONAL WATERWAY
PEACE RIVER COUNTRY EXTENDED STAY AREA
FORT ST. JOHN WILDERNESS TRIPPING CENTRE
FORT ST. JOHN
Hwy 29
Peace Reach
WILLISTON
ENERGY SOURCES THEME PARK ATTRACTION
WILLISTON LAKE BOAT CRUIS.
HUDSON'S HOPE
DAWSON CREEK REGIONAL TOURISM SERVICE CENTRE/REGIONAL GATEWAY
AZU LOCAL ALPINE SKI AREA/WINTER SPOR COMPLEXE
HART HIGHWAY REGIONAL TRAVEL CORRIDOR
B.C.R.
DAWSON CREEK
ALASKA HIGHWAY INTERPRETATION CENTRE
CHETWYND
TAKLA LAKE
Parsnip Reach
CHETWYND LOCAL TOURISM SERVICE CENTRE
MCKENZIE
NATION LAKES
NATION LAKES CHAIN RECREATIONAL WATERWAY
TUMBLER RIDGE
MCLEOD LAKE
TAKLA/NATION LAKES OUTDOOR RECREATION AREA
HWY 97
WAPITI FOOTHILLS OUTDOOR RECREATION AREA
MONKMAN PASS PARK
0
25
50
100
SCALE
IN KILOMETRES
0
25
50
100
SCALE
IN MILES

# Development Plan

## Peace River/Alaska Highway
## Regional Tourism Development Strategy

2

THIS IS A WORKING DRAWING AND THE INFORMATION PORTRAYED HEREON IS INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE NATURE AND TYPE OF DATA EVALUATED AND DOES NOT NECESSARILY DISPLAY ALL INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

## 6.4 General Description of Plan

The markets for tourism facilities throughout the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region are projected to grow appreciably in the next 5 to 20 year planning horizon as a result of increased national and international travel, available resource opportunities, growing regional and nearby Alberta markets, increased awareness of Canada's north and demands for quality leisure time amenities by provincial and regional residents. To realize the potential of this Region, a tourism plan should be implemented so that new facilities/attractions will be developed within a clear program for both the government and private sectors.

As outlined in Drawing No.2, Development Plan, an integral part of tourism growth and provision of economic and social benefits will be in the development of new extended stay areas and the expansion of tourism service centres within specific geographic areas offering supporting facilities, attractions and events. The demand for specialty tourism opportunities in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region is expected to increase appreciably over the planning horizon through a number of specific resource/market opportunities including trophy hunting, fly-in wilderness lodge experiences, backcountry travel, wilderness recreation, water-based recreation associated with wild and scenic rivers.

The Region has abundant tourism resources, including wilderness hunting/fishing lodges with provincial, North American and international clientele, which have been developed to varying degrees. A comparison of projected demand with supply indicates, that while there is an abundance of resources upon which the industry could grow, there is a growing need for facility and attraction developments in designated areas to complement the limited nature of existing facilities, events and attractions.

As indicated in the Provincial Tourism Development Strategy and as outlined in the strategy statement for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region (Figure 1), future tourism development is to be strategically located in extended stay areas and service centres of regional and local significance. Specific outdoor recreation areas and wilderness parks are also discussed. It is anticipated that by identifying specific areas with distinct theme developments, an identity can be established with a positive effect on the marketing of the resources. Through the establishment of particular attractions and facilities, a number of concerns can be more efficiently planned for or managed, including; mass mode transportation; development of a "critical mass"; provision of quality services, infrastructure, accommodation and attractions; protection of environemntal and quality of life objectives; and the need to prolong the visitor's length of stay and to extend the tourism season with the possibility of developing some winter tourism. Many of these concerns could only be met by proposing special attractions within the extended stay areas and the systematic planning of resources.

### 6.4.1 Peace River Country Extended Stay Area

The Peace River Plateau is strategically located in the northeast of the province with the Rocky Mountains to the south and west, the Alberta Plateau to the east and a great expanse of boreal forest to the north; the Alaska Highway a popular northern travel route passes through the area and brings hundreds of pass-through travellers each year. The area also includes the two major towns of the Region, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek, that provide considerable tourism, food, fuel and accommodation services. Further, both towns have scheduled air services and good accessibility to the growing nearby western Alberta markets. There is a rich variety of man-made and natural resources including the harnessed power of the Peace River behind the W.A.C. Bennett

Dam, coal, natural gas and oil energy sources, good wheat growing and cattle grazing land, several rivers and lakes for fishing, canoeing, boating. In addition, there are extensive recreation opportunities in the Foothills and mountains. This variety of assets and interesting features must be developed as part of a comprehensive attractions package that will cause the pass-through traffic to spend several days in the area.

With the development of the area as a tourism extended stay area it is anticipated that a number of proposed theme-oriented attractions can be established that will meet the interests of the major pass-through markets. These would include an energy sources theme park, a reservoir recreation area, a wilderness outfitters tripping terminal and a group of integrated man-made and historic attractions in the vicinity of Hudson's Hope. Through an integrated and comprehensive plan for the area a variety of new visitor attractions, authentic and consistent with the local character and heritage are possible. They can be established while the accommodation plant is being expanded and can be supported in the off-season by the growing regional market. Resort-style enterprises could be developed for package tours as well as touring traffic so that markets for quality accommodation and a wide range of attractions/activities may contribute to the diversification of the economic base. The following statements outline a number of the key considerations in the planning and development of the area:

1. Designate the Peace River Country (outlined in Drawing No.2) as a Tourism Extended Stay Area in the plans of the Peace River-Liard Regional District. This area should be established and include quality tourism services in designated centres, a variety of accommodation including resort style and a range of appropriate, interesting attractions and supporting events.

2. Develop and/or expand major attractions. The natural, man-made and historic resources located in this area have the

capability to support specific theme attractions. Major attractions to be developed or expanded include: an energy sources theme park focussing on extraction, refining and use of oil, natural gas and coal, pipelines and the Northern Lights at Fort St. John; Alexander MacKenzie and the exploration/fur trade heritage near Hudson's Hope; palaeontological resources; dams and hydro power generation at the Bennett Dam site; ranch and farm vacations; water-based recreation on Williston Lake, Site One reservoir and the planned "Site C" reservoir; a wilderness guides and outfitters terminal at Fort St. John; an Alaska Highway museum/interpretation centre at Mile 0 in Dawson Creek, winter recreation opportunities for snowmobiling and dog sled trips to cross-country and downhill skiing; popular events in all four seasons that will appeal to package tours, regional residents and Alaska Highway pass-through sectors.

3. Improve and expand all tourism-related services. A high standard of food, fuel, accommodation (roofed and unroofed, especially appropriate to the many self-contained recreational vehicles) and entertainment for destination-oriented visitors and pass-through traffic.

4. Establish Dawson Creek as a regional gateway for auto-touring markets and both Dawson Creek and Fort St. John as regional air gateways with tourist information services at both airports.

5. Expand and develop new shoulder and winter season attractions and recreational activities to extend visitor stay e.g., wildlife and waterfowl viewing areas, long distance snowmobile trails with warming huts and overnight accommodation at Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Chetwynd and Dawson Creek.

6. Protect and enhance the scenic qualities and landscape values of the Peace River Country. Manage wildlife habitats/ populations, sport fish populations, forest, range and water

resources at levels that will provide for the optimum quality of the outdoor recreation experience for regional residents and visitors.

7. Support the upgrading and/or development of museums, the restoration of historic sites and other heritage features which portray important elements of the Region's history.

8. Continue the development of promotional literature and signage which indicate the distinctive features of the area, events, special attractions, accommodation and related matters of interest to tourists.

9. The long term goal, perhaps even beyond the 20-year planning horizon, is to develop the resorts, accommodation, attractions, events and activities appropriate to a tourism destination area.

### 6.4.1.1 Dawson Creek Regional Tourism Service Centre and Regional Gateway

It is proposed that Dawson Creek at the Hart and Alaska Highways crossroads will continue as one of two main tourism service centres in the Region with quality accommodation and food services, summer and shoulder season events and a major Alaska Highway travel orientation centre and museum. Packaged bus travel, especially "adventure/sightseeing" travel is expected to increase along the Alaska Highway with the town increasingly serving various sized package bus and fly/R.V. drive operations. Thus Dawson Creek's service/gateway role should be strengthened and more attractions and events developed to entice visitors to stay longer.

1. Continue to upgrade and expand accommodation (roofed and unroofed), food and fuel services to meet the needs of the auto-touring, fly/R.V./auto drive tour group and commercial traveller markets.

2. Undertake a core area and highway entrance area visual improvement program with emphasis on theme signage and landscaping.

3. Continue to upgrade and expand the airport and institute improved scheduling with more direct flights to Edmonton, Prince George and Vancouver to facilitate package tour group travel and fly/drive travel. Expand auto and recreational vehicle rentals to encourage regional fly/drive vacations.

4. Expand the existing information centre into a major tourist orientation centre with central reservation services combining it with the famous Mile "O" cairn and an Alaska Highway museum/interpretation centre. Through sophisticated audio-visual, static displays and printed information, present a package of information for travellers along the Alaska Highway and for visitors to the extended stay area.

5. Develop audio packs for use along the Alaska Highway to relate information on the natural, human and historic features of the Region and distribute them at the orientation centre.

6. Develop an Alaska Highway Museum/Orientation centre in conjunction with an expanded information centre. With audio-visual, photographic displays and original equipment relate the human and engineering feats of The Highway construction.

#### 6.4.1.2 Fort St. John Regional Tourism Service Centre and Regional Gateway

This is the largest community in the Region and already a service centre for agriculture, transportation and a major focus of activity for the booming oil and gas industry, the Region's greatest employer. There is a regional airport and the economic activity has spurred considerable development of the accommodation and food service. At present tourism is a minor component of the local economy but it will likely become more important in the future when oil and gas-related exploration and construction declines. The well developed accommodation base will then be in need of new markets. Therefore, the following development recommendations have been formulated that will provide an alternative economic base for the future.

1. Continue to upgrade and expand quality food and accommodation establishments in response to market conditions.
2. Undertake a long-term core area beautification program with attention to architectural themes and landscaping.
3. Encourage greater use of the fair/rodeo grounds, possibly for harness or flat track racing with betting. This could be developed as part of a circuit including Hudson's Hope and Dawson Creek with an extended season.
4. Support spring and fall conventions focussing on regional, northern British Columbia and northwestern Alberta markets.
5. Expand the existing popular events and develop new areas for the shoulder season to broaden the tourist season and improve length of stay, e.g., rodeo, hot air ballooning, fall fair, Mukluk Rendezvous, Northern Food Fest with local Saskatoon pies, game meals, honey, etc. Tie the events to specialty theme tours to the area such as fall colour tours and Northern Lights tours.
6. Develop an "energy sources" theme park near the Peace River that will, in the long term, provide an economic base for the area when the non-renewable resources are gone.

### 6.4.1.3 Energy Sources Theme Park

The development of a major theme park with a strong amusement/education component based on the Region's indigenous energy resources could provide an important family attraction and travel generator which would encourage tourist travel to the southern part of the Region just as the non-renewable energy base begins to decline and a new economic base will be required for the developed accommodation and food services. In addition, the park's location on the Alaska Highway, near Highway 29, would encourage travellers to venture along these corridors and further support the various tourist enterprises. The site should be included in package tours and would be supported in the off-season by repeat attendance from the regional and nearby Alberta population centres.

1. Select a suitably attractive site near the Peace River, perhaps in proximity to the proposed "Site C" dam.

2. The theme park should be financed by revenues derived from the exploitation of the Region's renewable and non-renewable resources. The various industries (oil and gas, coal, hydro) would participate in the design of the various rides, active displays, etc. so their messages could also be conveyed.

3. The thematic aspect of the park should be based on a variety of indigenous themes such as: energy and gas/oil piplines and processes; recreation; geologic energy - oil, gas, coal; geologic history of the Peace River and Peace Plateau; various heritage themes e.g., dinosaurs, gold rush, Alexander MacKenzie and the exploration/fur trade era, riverboat travel, R.N.W.M.P. in the northwest, Bush Pilots and the north and the Alaska Highway construction.

4. The park should have significant amusement and educational components with first class rides, preferably related to established themes e.g., pipeline dark rides, gas processing

plant, oil refinery, hydro power generation, demonstration-simulation rides. The rides and displays must be of a participatory, active type rather than static and passive.

5. An IMAX theatre should be constructed with several shows available simultaneously and continuously.

6. Food services, buildings and attractions should be integrated on site but accommodation should be located in Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope or Chetwynd to avoid unsightly strip development.

7. Planning, design and operation should be carried out by a firm with theme park management expertise. The various firms involved in funding should participate in the design process. The park should attempt to become a commercially self-sufficient venture but with energy tax revenues to be provided as necessary during the initial operating phases.

### 6.4.1.4 Fort St. John Wilderness Outfitters Tripping Terminal

Fort St. John presently is the centre of guide/outfitter activity for northeastern British Columbia with many of the big game hunters flying in to be picked up by the lodge operators and then flown or driven to the hunting lodge. With the slow decline in big game populations and the growing interest in non-consumptive wildlife-based vacations, many of the lodge operators have been trying to expand their clientele and broaden their season of operation by offering "photographic hunts" and wilderness pack horse trips. Another method of reaching a larger market would be to offer short term (two to three days) remote/fly-in experiences to the pass-through tourists and to the "escape" vacation market.

1. The terminal should be designed and operated to provide remote guided mountaineering, canoeing and kayaking, long distance trail/pack horse trips, wildlife viewing experiences as

well as big game hunting in the roadless areas of the northern mountains and plateaux.

2. The terminal should act as a referral/reservation area to assign clients to guides offering suitable services and as a departure point for wilderness experiences. Transit access will be provided to the Terminal from the two regional airports and then to the small plane airstrip or float plan base once trip arrangements are made.

3. Promotion will be directed at a wide variety of market segments including Alaska Highway pass-through travellers, adventure tourists and the weekend/short escape vacation markets. The big game hunting aspects will require no further promotion.

#### 6.4.1.5 Peace River Reservoir Recreation Area

The Peace Canyon Dam near Hudson's Hope has been recently completed and the Site C dam about five kilometres from Fort St. John is in the assessment and planning stages. There is little in the way of formal (or informal) recreation facilities in the existing reservoirs as Williston Lake is very large and is dangerous for family boating because of debris and wind generated waves; the walls of the Peace Canyon reservoir are too steep. The Site C reservoir would appear to offer the best opportunities for water-based recreation and will be easily accessible from Fort St. John and the Alaska Highway.

1. Encourage planning and development of a system of reservoir recreation sites in suitable areas e.g. boat launches, beaches, unserviced camping.

2. Encourage the clean-up of debris, floating logs, removal of high stumps and development of waterfront access to the project.

3. Opportunities should be examined for commercially operated ventures on the lake offering services to regional residents and tourists e.g. marina, boat rentals, serviced campgrounds.

4. The provision of a fish hatchery, the first in the Arctic watershed, should also be supported. Funding programs should be encouraged to redevelop the natural spawning and fish habitat lossed as a result of flooding.

### 6.4.1.6 Hudson's Hope Regional Attraction Centre

This small community has several interesting features in close proximity and the residents are looking to tourism as a means of stimulating the local economy. The town is on the road to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam (22 km away) and the G. Shrum Generating Station, the single largest attraction in the Region averaging 34,000 visitors each year. The Peace Canyon Dam and generating station, 12 km southwest of Hudson's Hope, has also been completed. The area has excellent coal reserves that may eventually be exploited. However, little local benefit is derived from these features as there are no attractions/events that appeal to the visitors to spend more time in the area. The following proposals are suggested for tourism development.

1. Designate Hudson's Hope as a regional tourism attraction centre capitalizing on the host of man-made, historical and natural resources available in the Region. The area would be largely an activity centre with quality food services but only limited development of roofed accommodation is recommended.

2. Support the development by B.C. Hydro of a scenic lookout and restaurant over the Peace Canyon.

3. Expand the guided tours and film shows at the Bennett Dam and establish some at the Peace Canyon Dam. Displays should be developed that are more active and participatory rather than passive.

4. Williston Lake is the largest lake in British Columbia and despite the problems of debris and drawdown it is very scenic with some good fishing at the numerous creek mouths. Scheduled day-long and extended jet boat tours should be offered from Hudson's Hope. Rustic sites should be developed at numerous places along the shore including moorage and simple cabins for overnight stays and shelter during storms. B.C. Hydro should be encouraged to intensify the debris clearing program.

   In the longer term a four to five day trip could be offered from the Bennett Dam to MacKenzie utilizing either a self contained houseboat or a jet boat using a system of cabins.

   Boat tours should also be investigated for the new Peace Canyon reservoir. Depending on water levels in the Canyon, the new reservoir could offer some exceptional viewing opportunities for trips of one or two hours duration. The smaller size and fewer drawdown problems would make this a suitable area for family boating and a marina/boat rental operation.

5. The palaeontological resources are of an exceptional nature, occurring nowhere else in British Columbia. There should be high quality displays and interpretation developed for visitors' interest and enjoyment. Repatriation of some of the material from the Alberta Provincial Museum should be considered. The remaining fossil beds in the Peace Reach should be opened to visitors as well.

6. The fur trade was of considerable importance to the area with such men as Alexander MacKenzie and Simon Fraser playing important roles in the early history of the Peace River country. Hudson's Hope is considered the oldest European settlement in mainland British Columbia, founded as a fur trade post in the 1790s. The site of the Rocky Mountain

Portage House established by Simon Fraser in 1805 was lost due to the recent flooding by the Peace Canyon reservoir. However, a reconstruction and major monument to the early explorers should be carried out.

Many of the various heritage elements could be housed and properly presented in an expanded and upgraded Hudson's Hope Museum.

7. Improve the appearance of Hudson's Hope with a beautification and landscaping program within a distinct architectural theme. A program of preservation of the several heritage buildings should also be undertaken with adoptive re-use related to the tourism industry wherever possible.

8. A system of day use and overnight horseback/hiking trails should be developed to take advantage of the scenic terrain of this area of the Northern Rocky Mountains, Foothills and the two reservoirs. Mount Gething, Portage Mountain, Peace Canyon Reservoir and the Butler Ridge should be examined for these uses.

### 6.4.2 Chetwynd Local Tourism Service Centre

Chetwynd is at the junction of Hart Highway and Highway 29, the main route for travellers from the south heading for Hudson's Hope and Fort St. John. It is also locally important as a service centre to two popular outdoor recreation areas, Moberley Provincial Park to the north and Gwillim Lake Recreation Area to the south.

1. As an entry point to the Peace River Country, a tourist information centre of modest size with audio-visual packages on regional attractions to serve road (and perhaps rail) travellers, should be developed.

2. Upgrade roofed accommodation, food and fuel services in response to demand.

3. Develop signage to direct travellers to area and regional points of interest, e.g., Wapiti Foothills Outdoor Recreation Area.

4. Develop the facilities required to serve as a major overnight stopping point on the long distance snowmobile trail linking the four communities of Chetwynd, Hudson's Hope, Dawson Creek and Fort St. John. With the establishment of the Wapiti Foothills Outdoor Recreation Area, develop appropriate services for outdoor vacationers, e.g., guidebooks and equipment sales and rental.

### 6.4.3 Wapiti Foothills Outdoor Recreation Area

The growing regional population and the nearby growing Alberta markets are exerting considerable recreational pressures on the accessible areas in the southeastern part of the Region. Although the backcountry recreation, hunting and fishing values are high, the area is also used for grazing, forestry, mineral exploration and hunting guide/outfitter purposes. To avoid conflict with tourists, a large area should be set aside and managed largely to accommodate the regional/intra-regional demands. This will be managed as a multiple area.

1. Prepare a management plan that will reconcile the various types of resource use. Wherever possible, the management of the resources should provide for recreational use by individuals and commercially guided or outfitted groups who wish to enjoy the experience of lodges and backcountry recreation.

2. Develop a trail system for horses, hikers and skiers, canoe routes, jet boat routes, and a system of rustic campsites. Vehicular use, especially four-wheel drive, should be controlled to prevent degradation of the landscape.

3. Special management of the Kinuseo Falls area and the trail to Monkman Pass is required to maintain the scenic quality.

### 6.4.4 Fort Nelson Local Tourism Service Centre/Northern Gateway Centre

This community of 4,600 people in the midst of the northern wilderness is the northernmost service centre of significance on the B.C. portion of the Alaska Highway. It has an economy primarily based on the recent discovery and extraction of natural gas along with more traditional grazing, forestry, trapping, guiding and outfitting operations, along with some tourism services to Alaska Highway travellers. It is also an important transportation centre with an airport, the terminus of barge traffic on the Liard/Fort Nelson River system, the terminus of the B.C.R. line and the Liard Highway which is being constructed to Fort Simpson on the MacKenzie Highway in the Northwest Territories. Thus it can become a major node for tourist travel and wilderness adventure in northwestern Canada.

1. Develop food and fuel services, roofed and unroofed accommodation to meet short term market requirements. Facilities should be of moderate quality directed largely to touring markets but with the capability to handle package tour groups in the medium term.

2. Promote Fort Nelson as a gateway to the far north pristine wilderness, travel adventures and waterway experiences.

3. Establish a modest size visitor orientation centre with audio-visual packages illustrating the variety of activities and experiences available in the area. The concept of the "Golden Circle" northern B.C. loop tour should be promoted as well as fly-in tours and adventure travel modes.

4. Establish a small outfitters terminal in conjunction with the tourist orientation centre where visitors could make arrangements for a variety of northern land-based and water-based adventures.

5. Support local events especially those with a distinctive northern character e.g. Trappers Rendezvous. Encourage their expansion by promotion through visitor information and special packaging.

6. Work with the local residents and entrepreneurs, including the Native Indian population, to determine the appropriate scale and type of tourism development and activities.

7. Encourage the development of the Native Indian crafts industry with open workshops and sales for visiting tourists. Various aspects of the northern Native Indian culture could also be presented.

8. The indigenous peeled log structure or front would be an appropriate architectural theme for various tourists establishments, the orientation centre and the outfitters terminal. This architectural treatment should be encouraged.

9. Designate Old Fort Nelson (founded by Simon Fraser 1805) as an Historic Site. A program of stabilization of the remaining buildings should begin immediately to stop deterioration at the site. A long term project of restoration can then be initiated with guided tours for visitors.

### 6.4.4.1 Fort Nelson Wilderness/Waterway Tripping Terminal

Fort Nelson is situated at the centre of British Columbia's northernmost wilderness surrounded by the boreal forest, the northern foothills and Rocky Mountains to the west and the Yukon and Northwest Territories to the north. There are several northern guide outfitters with remote fly-in lodges and there are a wide variety of waterways with several different modes of travel. Most of the activities have a strong wilderness image and can be promoted as larger adventure vacations for those arriving by air.

1. In conjunction with the visitor orientation centre establish a small outfitters terminal where visitors can make arrangements for a variety of northern adventures and where those with previous reservations can be briefed and then embark on their trips.

2. Guide outfitters presently offer extended big game hunting trips to American and international clientele based in remote lodges and out-camps. Similar to the terminal in Fort St. John, the guides could also offer short (four day) fly-in wilderness trips to travellers on the Alaska Highway for wildlife viewing, pack horse trips, fishing, etc., in Kwadacha and Tatlatui Wilderness Parks and other roadless areas.

3. An operator should offer opportunities for the various types of river travel available in the Region. These could include: fly-in canoe/kayak trips to the Kechika and Gataga Wilderness Rivers with a pick-up at the Alaska Highway terminus; white-water river rafting trips through the Grand Canyon of the Liard; recreational rafting, jet boating, and canoe trips down the Fort Nelson, Prophet, Muskwa and Lower Liard; river cargo barge trips down the Liard to Fort Simpson on the MacKenzie River then fly-back or carry on down the MacKenzie to Inuvik, or a shorter trip e.g. two days to Fort Liard or the Nahanni River then fly back. A variety of circle trips could be arranged combining river and road and/or air travel for a distinct Northern Canadian river travel experience.

4. Other offerings from the terminal could include glacier/heli-skiing in the northern Rockies, two to three hour scenic flights, dog sled trips and trapline trips with an authentic trapper.

### 6.4.5 Provincial Parks

The Provincial Parks Branch has jurisdiction over a variety of areas in the Region from roadless Kwadacha and Tatlatui Parks which are only accessible by air, horseback or foot, to the intensively used Moberley Lake and Charlie Lake Parks. In addition, rest stops with the barest of facilities are also provided along the Alaska Highway.

Although this Plan is not directly concerned with local resident recreation and tourism, the fact that local use may conflict with visitor use requires the study team to urge the Parks and Recreation Division and the B.C. Forest Service Recreation Division to adequately provide for the recreational needs of the growing population (especially in the Fort St. John - Dawson Creek area) as well as those of tourists.

1. Special attention to tourist needs will be required in the reservoir recreation system that will be developed in the Williston, Peace Canyon and (eventually) the Site C reservoirs. It is suggested that, in the medium term, a Marine Access Park system, similar to that being developed for lakes and reservoirs in the south of the province, be established.

2. Stone Mountain and Muncho Lake Parks are two very beautiful but undeveloped areas astride the Alaska Highway. These two large parks should become the outdoor recreation show pieces of the northern provincial parks with enlarged campgrounds (which could be operated by the private sector on a concession basis), interpretive naturalist programs, a system of nature

trails of one hour duration as well as longer trails, and wildlife management that will enhance viewing opportunities.

3. The Liard Hot Springs Park provides an interesting and popular feature to travellers along the Alaska Highway. A development plan should be instituted that increases the recreational carrying capacity while retaining the natural character and essential quality of the resources.

4. Tatlatui and Kwadacha Parks should both be planned as wilderness parks with no motorized form of transport permitted within the park. Access will be only by air, foot or horseback. The surrounding lands should also be managed as roadless areas. This will protect wilderness landscape values that contribute positively to the image of the Region and the province and will provide for commercial outfitters.

5. The appearance, management and maintenance of the wayside parks should be improved substantially. Where there are demands for campgrounds which the private sector cannot fulfill, the Parks Branch should establish campgrounds as part of a campground system along the Alaska Highway. Both the public and private sectors constitute the campground system and commercial operators should be given every opportunity to provide required tourist services.

6. All plans and developments for all parks should take into account the distinct needs of the different markets that comprise the primary user groups. Thus the type and intensity of development of the lakeside/riverside parks in the south of the Region will differ from that of the northern parks and those on the Alaska Highway.

7. Large parts of the Northern Rocky Mountains and Cassiar Mountains should be declared roadless and managed to protect wilderness and wildlife values. It is understood that resource

exploration and extraction activities will continue to increase. However, the needless proliferation of resource roads, as has occurred in many other part of the province, should be sharply curtailed to ensure that large undisturbed areas will continue to exist thereby protecting the livelihood of trappers, Native Indians and guide outfitters. The existence of such areas contribute positively to the "wilderness freedom" market image of the Region and the province, and will enable the long term attraction of high expenditure market segments.

### 6.4.6 Northern Rivers

There are several rivers in the north of the Region with considerable capability for a variety of activities of growing interest to tourists. River travel of various types can contribute strongly to the "wilderness freedom" image of the Region and offers opportunities for local entrepreneurs to establish tourism businesses. The various designation of the rivers will enable management of the resources in a manner that assures the long term viability and appeal of the northern rivers experience.

#### 6.4.6.1 Liard Wild and Scenic River

The section of the Liard River east of the Liard Hot Springs Park flows through wilderness areas with some spectacular scenery and white water, especially in the Grand Canyon of the Liard. This stretch of the river through to the confluence with the Fort Nelson River has excellent commercial rafting capability. The river is not yet commercially run, however, it has been surveyed by several companies and will likely be used in the near future as the demand for this type of experience continues to grow. To protect this special resource the following recommendations are made.

1. Designate by provincial statute a River Management Program for the protection of historic, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, similar in principle to related American legislation.

2. Designate the Liard River from the Hot Springs Park to the confluence with the Fort Nelson as a Wild and Scenic River. This stretch of the river would also qualify for wilderness river designation.

3. Manage the river and the surrounding landscape with special land use controls so that adjacent activities and developments do not detract from the river running experience.

4. Provide suitable access-egress points and camping areas in designated areas for use by individuals and commercial rafting expediations.

5. The consultants regard the development of the Liard River for hydro-electric power as detrimental to the tourism industry of the Region. The possibilities for reservoir recreation, already over-abundant within the Region, would be far less than the tourism/recreation, fish and wildlife values of the river in its natural state.

### 6.4.6.2 Fort Nelson/Lower Liard Recreational Waterway

Although not quite as exciting as some of the other rivers in northern British Columbia, the lower Liard and Fort Nelson still have considerable appeal to the wilderness canoeist or jet boater. The surrounding valley and forests are largely in an undisturbed state (except for winter roads and seismic lines from oil and gas exploration) and the cabins, camps and boats of Native Indian trappers and hunters conjure up visions of the fur trade era when traders' canoes were the sole means of transportation and communication between the Hudson's Bay posts.

1. Designate these two rivers from Fontas on the B.C.R. to the Northwest Territories as a Recreational Waterway for use by canoeists, river rafts and jet boats. The barge traffic will, of course, continue to be an integral part of the river experience.

2. Provide suitable access-egress points and camping areas in designated areas for use by individuals and commercially guided groups.

3. Manage the rivers and surrounding landscape with land use controls so that adjacent activities and developments do not detract substantially from the existing character of the rivers.

### 6.4.6.3 Gataga/Kechika Wilderness River

This is one of the true wilderness canoe routes in British Columbia as the area has been frequented only by geologists, trappers, hunters and canoeists. Access is only by air, foot or horseback.

1. Designate the Gataga and Kechika system as a Wilderness River for use by canoeists and kayakers. In keeping with this designation, no motorized or vehicular access (except float plane or helicopter) will be permitted in the vicinity of the river.

2. Manage the river and the surrounding landscape in a manner that will protect and maintain the pristine natural conditions in perpetuity.

3. As the popularity of this canoe route increases, establish recreational and bio-physical carrying capacities to ensure the continuation of the wilderness character.

### 6.4.7 Azu Alpine Ski Area/Winter Sports Complex

This ski area presently serves local and nearby regional markets from MacKenzie to Fort St. John with some visitation from Prince George and Northwest Alberta. The terrain is quite good for winter recreation with considerable potential for expansion of alpine skiing. Regional markets are growing substantially; the major limitation is the distance from major markets and this is not likely to be overcome for the foreseeable future. Therefore, the following recommendations are made.

1. Continue to expand the alpine and cross-country skiing capacity and base facilities in response to demand generated by the local, regional and neighbouring region's population growth.
2. Marketing efforts should be focussed primarily on these groups with promotion of heli-skiing to attract wider attention to the area.
3. The long term objective would be to develop a winter sports complex with a well developed alpine ski area supplemented by cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, heli-skiing, ice-skating, tobogganing, with sufficient on-hill accommodation (commercial and private) and food services to enable Azu to become a winter resort for northeastern British Columbia and northwestern Alberta.

### 6.4.8 MacKenzie Community

A significant tourism role is not foreseen for this town for the short or medium term planning horizons. Any development will be largely for resident recreation and for the provision of some services for backcountry vacationers using Williston Lake and the Takla/Nation Lakes Outdoor Recreation Area. Therefore, expansion of tourism services (food, fuel, and accommodation, both roofed and unroofed) should be in response to demand.

In the longer term tourist facilities could be developed in relation to the Williston Lake boat excursions proposed to operate from the Hudson's Hope area.

### 6.4.9 Williston Lake Recreational Waterway

The construction of the Bennett Dam and the subsequent flooding of the Peace River valley and the Rocky Mountain Trench created the largest body of freshwater in the province. The distance from major markets, wind, drawdown and debris problems have greatly inhibited recreational use of the lake/reservoir. However, with adequate management this feature can become an important tourism/recreation resource for the Region in the future.

1. Jet boat tours can be offered from Hudson's Hope for day-long and extended scenic tours. B.C. Hydro should, therefore, be encouraged to intensify the debris clearing programs.

   In the longer term, four to five day trips could be offered between the Bennett Dam and MacKenzie using either a self-contained houseboat or jet boats and a series of rustic cabins.

2. Similar to programs for the large lakes and reservoirs in the southern part of the province, a marine Access Park System should be developed for Williston. Attention can be focused initially on the Peace Reach to meet the demands originating from the Hudson's Hope area and the regional population. The Parsnip Reach could then be developed in time for the Hudson's Hope-MacKenzie boat tours. A combination of campsites and rustic cabins are to be developed for the use of the public and the commercial tour operators (along with moorage facilities).

3. Float plane flights along the reservoir can also be offered for tourists taking advantage of the stunning scenery and the availability of the bush plane services of the Region. Hudson's Hope and MacKenzie should be the bases for these operations.

### 6.4.10 Takla/Nation Lakes Outdoor Recreation Area

This is a large rolling plateau area with excellent backcountry and near-wilderness water-based recreation opportunities. It is accessible via resource roads from Highway 97 on the west and the Yellowhead to the south, with most use originating from Prince George and the communities of Vanderhoof and Fort St. James. This area is renowned for its fishing and several rustic fishing lodges have been established along with several guide outfitters operations. Fly-in fishing and hunting experiences are popular with American and European tourists.

1. Designate the area outlined on Drawing No.2, Development Plan, as an Outdoor Recreation Area and manage it in conjunction with the Fraser Plateau Outdoor Recreation Area proposed for the neighbouring Yellowhead 16 Tourism Region. Although the area is, and will continue to be, subject to widespread logging, the undisturbed nature of much of the terrain, wildlife and sport fishing resources, should be protected and managed to protect tourism/recreation benefits.

2. Designate the Nation Lakes Chain from Tsayta Lake to Chuchi Lake as a Recreational Waterway. Presently it is a near wilderness canoe route although power boats can go all the way from the boat launch on Chuchi Lake to Tsayta Lake. The canoeists will have to share the lakes as the good fishing is likely to attract increasing numbers of boaters.

3. Wherever possible, the management of the resources should provide for recreational use by individuals and clients of guide outfitters and fishing lodge operators. This is especially important in the vicinity of the lakes and navigable rivers as they are the focus of most activity.

4. Prepare a management plan that will reconcile the various types of resource use. Further commercial recreation opportunities should be identified to provide further economic benefits to the Region.

5. Vehicles, especially four-wheel drive, should be restricted to the resource roads and not allowed to proliferate as they cause significant environmental impacts and degrade the quality of the landscape.

### 6.4.11 Travel Corridors

Travel through and within the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region is an important tourism and recreational activity as a result of the variety of scenic landscapes, the dispersed nature of many of the attractions and activity areas, and the long distances between points with the Region. The existing transportation system offers major opportunities for tourist travel by all land and air modes - scheduled commercial airplane, bus plane, auto/bus and rail. The major mode is the highway, particularly the Alaska Highway, linking Dawson Creek and Fairbanks, Alaska. The 2,538 km Alaska Highway is the single biggest tourist travel generator in the Region. The road network in the small area of Dawson Creek and Fort St. John in the southeast edge of the Region is relatively dense due to the considerable degree of human settlement and activity. Elsewhere, the road network is rather meagre with few secondary or even resource roads leaving the main highways. Large areas are inaccessible (except by air or foot). In the vast boreal forest and muskeg to the east of the Foothills ground travel is virtually impossible unless the ground is frozen.

Most tourism travel is by the two main roadways - the Hart and Alaska Highways supplemented by the secondary Highways 39 and 29. Air travel is also significant with two regional airports at Dawson Creek and Fort St. John. Fort St. John offers direct flights to Prince George, Fort Nelson, Whitehorse and Edmonton and Fort Nelson is also linked to Edmonton and Watson Lake. Because of the inaccessibility of much of the Region, small charter aircraft and float planes are important means of travel.

The B.C.R. connects Dawson Creek, Fort St. John and Fort Nelson to Prince George with a link from Dawson Creek to the Northern Alberta Railway. No passenger service is offered at present.

Several corridors are identified in Drawing No.2 with varying modes of transportation, levels of significance (provincial, regional), and purpose (touring, recreational, multi-purpose). A visual analysis is required of all significant surface routes to determine the landscape resources that require protection for their scenic qualities. Major travel corridors should incorporate design guidelines regarding access, wayside parks, signage and control of adjacent land uses.

### 6.4.11.1 Highway Corridors

The Alaska Highway extending from Dawson Creek to the Yukon border is designated as a Provincial Travel Corridor because of its importance to travel in the northern part of the province. This highway is also part of a major northern British Columbia loop route called the "Golden Circle" which includes the Hart, Alaska, Stewart-Cassiar and Yellowhead Highways. Thus, the long-term program of paving and alignment improvements should be continued as the Alaska Highway is expected to remain an important northern travel route. The completion of the Liard Highway between Fort Nelson and Fort Simpson will open new circle routes linking British Columbia with northwestern Alberta and the Northwest Territories that should be marketed on a co-operative basis.

It should be noted that as part of the Provincial Strategy and also incorporated within the other regional tourism plans, travel by private automobile has been de-emphasized. It is recognized, however, that private automobile, especially the recreational vehicle, will continue to be the major form of tourist travel in the north and allowances must be made for this fact if the potential of the northern tourism industry is to be realized. Therefore, the following recommendations regarding the Highway Corridors are made.

1. Designate the Alaska Highway as a Provincial Travel Corridor, the Hart Highway, Highway 29 and the Liard Highway (under construction) as Regional Travel Corridors. A program of improvement and paving should be on-going.

2. There are a variety of northern loop tours that could be marketed. The "Golden Circle" route should be promoted as part of British Columbia's northern experience that will benefit the two northern tourism regions. There are several other loop routes linking northwestern Alberta and the Northwest Territories that should be investigated.

3. Develop distinctive theme signage for the Alaska Highway and the "Golden Circle". Wherever possible, special management controls should be implemented to protect landscape visual integrity along the corridors. Consideration should be given to implementing design guidelines which would improve historic and landscape appreciation by means of pull-offs at posted vista points and historic and natural interpretation at specified nodes.

4. Food, fuel and accommodation services should also be carefully designed and placed in defined nodes. As a general rule, all travel services on all travel routes are to be provided in nodes and the proliferation of unsightly strip development is to be avoided.

### 6.4.11.2 B.C.R. Regional Rail Corridor

The B.C.R. service throughout the Region is geared solely for freight transportation and this is not expected to change in the near future. For the medium and long term however, northern rail package excursions should be explored. A special tourist train could be operated several times each summer departing from Prince George and travelling to Fort Nelson. A variety of stops would be arranged along with side trips e.g., Hudson's Hope area attractions, to coincide with some of the popular events. From Fort Nelson, passengers could be flown back to Prince George or taken on one of the several river trips offered through the outfitters terminal at Fort Nelson before being flown back.

### 6.4.11.3 Air Travel

Air travel is a significant means of tourist transportation into the Region from other centres and, perhaps more importantly, within the Region, as there are vast areas with no road access. The regional airports at Fort St. John, Dawson Creek and Fort Nelson should be expanded and the number of flights increased in response to the growing demands for fly/drive and adventure vacation travel in the Region. It is expected that the small aircraft and float plane services to the remote lodges and guide outfitters camps will also increase with individual and packaged adventure holiday trips. The growing North American recreational aircraft market can also be attracted to the Region. Thus local airfields and landing strips will also require attention.

### 6.4.11.4 Fly/Drive Adventure Loop Tours

The strong image of the northern British Columbia wilderness coupled with the adventure of driving the Alaska Highway provide commercial opportunities for organized loop tours capitalizing on the growing individual adventure tour market. At present, recreational vehicle rentals in the south of the province require an additional premium to be paid if the vehicle is to be driven on gravel roads. This has tended to discourage many people. It is therefore proposed that:

1. An adventure loop tour along the "Golden Circle" route should be aggressively marketed and promoted throughout North America and Europe, capitalizing on the strong image of British Columbia's (and Canada's) north. The emphasis should be on utilization of smaller vehicles, special campgrounds and occasional stays in local roofed accommodation on route.
2. One package should include a fully equipped van-chassis recreation vehicle (e.g. stove, cots, c.b. radio, utensils, fishing gear, guidebooks such as Milepost). For those who wish to have a greater range of experiences and a more organized trip, a planned and timed itinerary could be arranged with all special events, trips, guides and experiences arranged beforehand. Both package tour operators and the Regional Tourist Association should be able to assist in this respect.
3. Support the development of a rental establishment of small recreational vehicles and automobiles especially equipped to deal with northern road conditions.

### 6.4.12 Resource Management

The Region has an exceptional variety of fish and wildlife resources that attract large numbers of tourists from American and international markets as well as being popular with regional, provincial and Albertan markets. Increasing consumptive demands are stressing the wildlife populations while many of the important habitats are being lost or altered due to resource development activities, e.g., hydro development, logging, mining and oil and gas exploration/drilling. In many areas wildlife populations are clearly threatened and increased protection is required if they are to recover. The demand for viewing opportunities is more important than hunting in many areas. Fishing continues to be a major recreational activity and increased management and protection of habitat is necessary. If the valued aspects of these natural resources are to continue in the future as a viable basis for tourism it is recommended that:

1. Greater consideration must be given to fish and wildlife management objectives by all other resource management agencies and in land use and development planning.

2. Support increased staffing for the required management activities in order to enhance and protect fish and wildlife populations. Increased attention is to be given to providing wildlife viewing opportunities.

3. Implement integrated resource management planning throughout the Region which will bring about optimal utilization of the various natural resources and protection of habitat and landscape values.

## 6.5 Summary of Key Development Proposals

The following statements outline the major development proposals for the Peace River-Alaska Highway Tourism Region.

- Establish the Peace River Country Extended Stay Area in the vicinity of Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope and the surrounding landscape. A variety of quality tourism features, attractions and activities are to be provided that will capture the pass-through traffic along the Alaska Highway. The long term objective is to develop a Destination Area.

- The Extended Stay Area will consist of two Regional Tourism Service Centres/Regional Gateways, a wilderness tripping terminal, a theme park, a reservoir recreation area and a Regional Attractions Centre.

- Fort St. John is designated a Regional Tourism Service Centre/ Regional Gateway for air travel while Dawson Creek is designated a Regional Tourism Service Centre/Regional Gateway for highway travel.

- Fort Nelson is to be a Local Tourism Service Centre and a Northern Gateway, and Chetwynd is designated a Local Tourism Service Centre.

- Hudson's Hope is to be developed as a Regional Attractions Centre based on the Bennett Dam, the fur trade heritage, reservoir recreation and boating and the palaeontalogy resources.

- A Theme Park is to be developed near Fort St. John with participatory types of displays and rides based on the Region's abundant natural energy resources and several heritage themes.

- There are three designated Outdoor Recreation Areas; the first based on the reservoirs of the Peace River west of Fort St. John; the second on the Rocky Mountains and Foothills south of Chetwynd; and the third on the lake-dotted plateau area on the southern edge of the Region to the west of the Hart Highway.

- The Alaska Highway is designated a Provincial Travel Corridor and part of the "Golden Circle" ,a special loop tour of northern British Columbia. An Alaska Highway Interpretation Centre will be established at Mile "O" in Dawson Creek and integrated with a Regional Visitor Orientation Centre.

- The Hart Highway (No.97) from Summit Lake to Dawson Creek, Highway 29 linking Chetwynd, Hudson's Hope and Fort St. John and the Liard Highway from Fort Nelson to the Northwest Territories border, are designated as Regional Travel Corridors.

  Azu Ski Village will gradually be developed from a Local Alpine Ski Area to a Regional Alpine Ski Resort and Winter Sport Complex.

- The river system of the northern part of the Region will receive special management as several of the high capability rivers are designated for tourism/recreation purposes e.g., Liard Wild and Scenic River, Fort Nelson River/Lower Liard Recreational Waterway, Gataga/Kechika Wilderness River.

- Fort Nelson will have an Outfitters Tripping Terminal specializing in a variety of waterway recreation opportunities as well as fly-in fishing, hunting and wilderness travel.

- The system of provincial parks along the Alaska Highway are to receive more attention in order to develop increased and improved camping, nature interpretation, hiking and wildlife viewing opportunities.

- Tatlatui and Kwadacha are to be maintained as Wilderness Parks for fly-in and walk-in recreation. Large areas in the surrounding mountains and plateaux are to remain roadless.

- The Williston Reservoir is to be designated as a Recreational Waterway with a marine access park system, jet boat or house-boat tours and scenic float plane flights.

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX 1

## TECHNICAL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

In the following, several tourism related technical terms are identified and defined in terms of their usage in this tourism development plan. The definitions are based on both their current use in the literature and general tourism planning, and their particular application to the industry in British Columbia.

1. Tourism

The travel, activities and services used by any British Columbia resident beyond a 40 km (25 miles) radius from home for the purpose of personal enjoyment. Also, the travel, activities and services used by non-residents who enter the province for any reason other than work. It is recognized that elements of tourism are often involved when people travel for business purposes.

2. Tourist

Any British Columbia resident travelling in excess of 40 km (25 miles) from his/her home for any purpose other than commuting to work and any non-resident who enters British Columbia for any purpose other than work.

3. Tourism Destination Area

A distinct geographic area containing one or more tourism destination resorts integrated into a network of supporting facilities, attractions and events reflecting, through developments and programs, one or more of the area's dominant historic or natural themes. The developments and programs may be oriented to one or more major seasons and may attract a broad range of market segments depending upon the quality and quantity of tourism amenities available.

4. Provincial Tourism Destination Area

In an international and national context, the entire Province of British Columbia can be defined as a tourism destination area. However, in the context of the Provincial Tourism Development Strategy, it refers to a nationally and internationally recognized geographic area that offers a (virtually) complete range of facilities, attractions, activities and events during all four seasons of the year that will attract tourists from all market segments who spend the major part, and frequently all, of their vacation trip within this area. It is accessible by all major transportation modes and several travel corridors. At present, only Vancouver and Victoria qualify for this status; however, other areas of the Province will be planned to attain this status.

5. Regional Destination Area

This is a distinct geographic area which offers a sufficiently wide range of facilities, attractions, activities and events during one or two main tourism seasons that will attract provincial and regional market segments (and adjacent U.S. and Alberta visitors) who spend the major part or all of their vacation trip within this particular area. Examples of such regional destination areas are the Okanagan Valley, the Columbia/Windermere Lakes area and Fernie/Crowsnest Pass Area.

6. Extended Stay Area

An area that has high volumes of pass-through traffic and a considerable variety of partially or undeveloped tourist resources, development efforts are to be focussed on providing attractions to capture some of the tourist traffic and extend their length of stay by half a day or overnight. This designation is often a transitional phase with the area gradually developing as a destination area or a resort community in the long term planning horizon.

7. Outdoor Recreation Area

This is a large identifiable geographical area with a broad range of landforms, water features and vegetation associations whose primary management purpose is to provide opportunities for extensive land and water-based recreation for the public and the clientele of commercial outdoor recreation outfitters.

8. Four Season Tourism Destination Area

A distinct geographic area containing an integrated network of tourism destination resorts and supporting tourism developments offering a wide range of facilities, attractions, activities and events on a year round basis, reflecting through either the developments or programs the area's dominant, historic and natural themes. Accessible by major transportation modes along several travel corridors, the area attracts a broad range of international, provincial and/or regional market segments.

In a four-season tourism destination area, the tourism industry is the primary employer and the major source of income for the residents of the area, and there is a strong commitment by the local residents and the relevant municipal governments to stimulate the growth and development of the tourism industry.

9. Provincial Tourism Service Centre

A community offering a complete range of services to the tourist on a 24 hour basis including a variety of types and qualities of accommodation facilities, food, beverage and night entertainment, grocery and other retail facilities, gasoline and automobile service facilities, health care, banking facilities, a regional tourism information centre and other related facilities. Victoria and Vancouver are examples of two provincial tourism service centres.

10. Regional Tourism Service Centre

A community offering many services to the tourist but with a somewhat limited variety of types and qualities of accommodation facilities, food, beverage and night entertainment facilities, grocery and other retail facilities, gasoline and automobile service facilities, banking facilities, a regional tourism information centre and other related facilties. Examples of such centres include Cranbrook, Kelowna and Prince George.

11. Local Service Centre

A community offering a limited range of essential services to the tourist including accommodation facilities, food and beverage facilities, grocery and other retail facilities, gasoline and automobile service facilities, banking facilities, a local information centre and other related facilities, e.g. Revelstoke, Campbell River, Kimberley and Fernie.

12. International Gateway Centre

A population centre where overseas tourist enter Canada to commence their visit. Such a gateway offers either an international airport or port facility, a complete range of tourism services and accommodation, and has access via a variety of transportation modes and corridors to all parts of the province. Examples are Vancouver, Seattle, Calgary and Edmonton.

13. Provincial Gateway Centre

A population centre where Canadian or U.S. visitors enter the province to commence their visit. Such a gateway allows entry by air, ship, rail or major highway, offers a broad range of tourism services and accommodations, and has access via a variety of travel modes and corridors to all parts of the province. Examples include Victoria and Prince Rupert.

14. Regional Gateway Centre

A population centre on a provincial or regional travel corridor where tourists commence their visit to a region. Such a gateway allows entry by air, rail, port or highway, offers a considerable range of tourism services and accommodation and has access via several travel modes and routes to most of the region. For example, Kimberley/Cranbrook and Nanaimo.

15. Provincial Travel Corridor

A well travelled, distinct linear route linking international or provincial gateways with provincial or regional service centres and tourism destination areas. The major type of corridor of this type is the highway link between between Calgary and Vancouver. Planning and development along these corridors would be subject to special planning and design.

16. Regional Travel Corridor

A paved or unpaved route linking destination areas and natural or historic attractions with local or regional service centres and areas that are of regional significance. Examples might include the Highway 1/2/3A link between Vancouver and the Okanagan Valley, the portion of the Crowsnest Highway 3 linking Lethbridge and Fernie.

17. Scenic Drive/Historic Route/Ecotour

A paved or unpaved route or trail that brings the traveller into contact with landscapes, natural features, historic sites or monuments of significance to the heritage of the province or the region. An itinerary may be prepared for tourists on a group mode or other basis. Such tours etc. can take a day or longer to complete.

18. Recreational Waterway

A river-lake-canal corridor having a high capability for various types of motorized and non-motorized boating and associated recreational activities.

19. Historic Waterway

A river-lake-canal corridor that played a significant role in the exploration, trade and settlement of the province, is navigable by non-motorized and/or motorized pleasure craft and has inherent capability for history interpretation and associated recreational activities.

20. Wild and Scenic River

A river in a setting of outstanding natural beauty. There must be rapids and white water. Both non-motorized and motorized river travel is permissible.

21. Wilderness River

A river and its surrounding valley lands that are virtually in a pristine natural state with little evidence of human activities except on an historical nature. The river must have significant scenic and recreational capability and be navigable for at least three months of the year. Only non-motorized boating is permissible.

## 22. Tourism Destination Resorts

An establishment offering in one complex under single management, a reasonable range of man-made and/or natural recreational amenities and facilities support by accommodation, food and beverage services.

a) Summer Resorts: Water or land-oriented facility complexes providing natural and/or man-made recreational amenities and activities for overnight or long-stay visitors during the summer, with possible extensions into spring and fall shoulder seasons.

b) Winter Resorts: Primarily a land-oriented facility complex offering a variety of natural or man-made recreational amenities and activities for overnight or long-stay visitors during the winter season.

c) Alpine Ski Area: A commercially operated winter recreation area primarily focussed on the provision of downhill skiing opportunities with a variety of lifts, tows, skiable terrain and with base facilities. Limited on-hill commercial accommodation is available.

d) Year-Round Resorts: A water and land-oriented facility complex offering a wide variety of natural or man-made recreational amenities and activities for overnight and long-stay visitors during the entire year.

23. Tourism Attraction

A physical feature of outstanding interest which can be either natural (e.g. Takakaw Falls) or man-made (Fort St. James). There may or may not be facilities constructed to enable fuller enjoyment by visitors, e.g. Harrison Hot Springs Resort vs Kwadacha Wilderness Park. The attraction may be of international, national, provincial, regional or local significance depending on its ability to attract tourists from those market segments.

24. Tourism Event/Festival

A transitory man-made occurrence, celebration of activity of considerable interest and notability that is usually (but not always) held on an annual basis, e.g., rodeo, folk festivals, ski races. They can be of international, national, provincial, regional or local significance depending on the markets that are attracted (competitors/spectators).

25. Tourism Facility

An establishment whose primary purpose is to offer a particular service or recreation activity opportunity to the tourist. Services may include accommodation, food, beverage or automotive services, while recreation activity opportunities can range from ski developments to tennis courts, from a marina to an information centre.

26. National Park

Part of a system of outstanding and representative natural areas of Canadian significance administered by Parks Canada. The purpose is to provide opportunities for public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural heritage so as to leave it unimpaired for future generations. There are five national parks in British Columbia at the present time.

27. Provincial Park

Part of a system of outstanding and representative natural areas with a high recreational capability of national, provincial and regional significance administered by the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing, Parks Branch. There is a classification system of six types whereby parks are managed for various intensities of recreational use on a continuous basis ranging from those primarily intended for preservation of undeveloped natural systems and low intensity recreation to those developed to accommodate intensive recreation activities, for example, beaches, boat launching areas, campgrounds, etc.

28. Historic Park

An area containing outstanding heritage resources associated with persons, places and events of historic significance. Means are developed to enable public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in a manner that leaves the resources unimpaired for future generations. These parks can be administered by the province or Parks Canada.

29. Marine Park

Coastal areas in the high recreational boating capability developed by the Provincial Parks Branch. They are developed to provide essential facilities for the enjoyment of the boating public while striving to maintain the attractiveness and integrity of the natural surroundings. Inland lakes/reservoirs are also included in this program.

30. Wilderness Parks or Conservancies/Reserves/Nature Conservancies

A pristine roadless tract in which natural processes and ecological communities are preserved. Extensive, low impact recreational uses are permitted, however, no exploitation or development is permitted except as may be necessary for the preservation of natural processes.

31. International Market

Residents of an overseas country having a propensity to travel to British Columbia (partially or entirely for personal enjoyment).

32. U. S. Market

Residents of the United States of America having a propensity to travel to British Columbia.

33. Canadian Market

Residents of the Canadian provinces and territories other than British Columbia having a propensity to travel to British Columbia.

34. Provincial Market

Residents of British Columbia having a propensity to travel in British Columbia.

35. Regional Market

Residents of regions within British Columbia having a propensity to travel within the confines of that region for the purpose of personal enjoyment.

36. Local Market

Local residents having a propensity to use nearby (one-half to one hour driving time) tourism and recreation developments for the purpose of personal enjoyment.

## APPENDIX 2

## THE INTERNATIONAL RIVER CLASSIFICATION

The following interpretation of the International River Classification is made by Canoe Sport British Columbia.

### Grade 1

Easy. Waves small and regular; passages clear; occasional sand banks and artificial difficulties like bridge piers. Suitable for novices in closed canoes, kayaks and open Canadian canoes.

### Grade 2

Quite easy. Rapids of medium difficulty; passages clear and wide. Occasional boulders in stream. Suitable for intermediate paddlers in closed canoes, kayaks and open Canadian canoes.

### Grade 3

Medium difficulty. Waves numerous, high, irregular. Rocks and narrow (clear) passages. Considerable experience in manoeuvring required. Advance scouting usually needed. Canoes will ship water, and unless equipped with spray covers, will require frequent emptying. Kayaks must be equipped with spray covers. Suitable for experienced paddlers in closed canoes and kayaks, and expert paddlers in open Canadian canoes.

### Grade 4

Difficult. Long rapids, powerful irregular waves; dangerous rocks, boiling eddies; passages difficult to reconnoitre; advance scouting mandatory; powerful and precise manoeuvring required. Spray decks mandatory. Suitable for expert closed canoes and kayaks only. Not suitable for open Canadian canoes.

Grade 5

Very difficult. Extremely demanding long and very violent rapids, following each other almost without interruption. River bed extremely obstructed; big drops; very steep gradient; advance scouting mandatory and usually difficult due to nature of terrain. Suitable for expert paddlers only in closed canoes and kayaks with specific whitewater training under expert leadership. Not suitable for open Canadian canoes.

Grade 6

Extraordinarily difficult. The difficulties of Grade 5 carried to extremes. Nearly impossible and very dangerous. Suitable for teams of expert paddlers only in closed boats at favourable water levels and after careful study, with fully trained and experienced rescue team in position. Not suitable for open Canadian canoes.

POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL